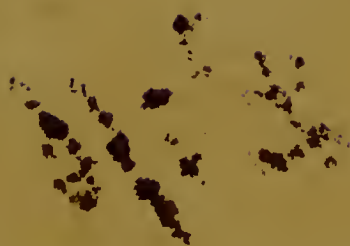




L 7/6

R56017



L 7/6.







# OBSERVATIONS

ON

## M A N,

HIS FRAME, HIS DUTY, AND HIS  
EXPECTATIONS.

*IN TWO PARTS.*

PART THE SECOND:

CONTAINING

OBSERVATIONS ON THE  
DUTY AND EXPECTATIONS OF MANKIND.

BY DAVID HARTLEY, M. A.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

---

LONDON:

FIRST PRINTED IN MDCCXLIX.

Reprinted for

J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, BY W. EYRES, HORSE-MARKET:  
WARRINGTON.

MDCCCI.

1180  
1181

THE  
C O N T E N T S  
OF THE  
SECOND PART.

---

INTRODUCTION.

*Distribution of the second part, Page 3, 4.*

CHAP. I.

Of the BEING and ATTRIBUTES of GOD,  
and of NATURAL RELIGION.

*Something must have existed from all eternity, 5, 6. There must be an infinite and independent Being, 6—9. The infinite and independent Being is indued with infinite power and Knowledge, 9—13. God is infinitely benevolent, 13—23. Five notions of infinite benevolence considered, and compared together, 23—30. There is but one God, 30, 31. God is a spiritual being, 31—34. God is an eternal and omnipresent being, 34, 35. God is an immutable being, 35. God is a free being, 35—37. Holiness, justice, veracity, mercy, and all other moral perfections, ought to be ascribed to God in an infinite degree, 37—41. God is to be considered by us not only as our creator, but also as our governor, judge, and father, 41—45. The foregoing evidences for the divine attributes afford a pro-*

*per foundation for natural religion, 45—48. Natural religion receives great light and confirmation from revealed, 48—52. Religion presupposes free-will in the popular and practical sense, i. e. it presupposes a voluntary power over our affections and actions, 53—55. Religion does not presuppose free-will in the philosophical sense, i. e. it does not presuppose a power of doing different things, the previous circumstances remaining the same, 56—66. The infinite power and knowledge of God exclude free-will in the philosophical sense, 66—70.*

## CHAP. II.

### Of the TRUTH of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

*The genuineness of the scriptures proves the truth of the facts contained in them, 72—77. The genuineness of the scriptures proves their divine authority, 77, 78. The truth of the principal facts contained in the scriptures proves their divine authority, 79, 80. Three different suppositions, which may be made concerning the divine inspiration of the scriptures, 80—84. The manner in which the scriptures have been handed down from age to age, proves both their genuineness and truth, 84—86. The great importance of the scriptures proves both their genuineness and truth, 86—96. The language, style, and manner of writing used in the scriptures, prove their genuineness, 97, 98. The great number of particular circumstances of time, place, persons, &c. mentioned in the scriptures, prove both their genuineness and truth, 99—104. The agreement of the scriptures with history, natural and civil, is a proof of their genuineness and truth, 104—122. The agreement of the books of the Old and New Testaments with themselves and each other, is an argument both of their genuineness and truth, 122—126. The unity of design, which appears in the dispensations recorded in the*



the scriptures, is an argument not only of their truth and genuineness, but also of their divine authority, 126—136. Divine communications, miracles, and prophecies, are agreeable to natural religion, and seem even necessary in the infancy of the world, 137—141. The objections made against the miracles recorded in the scriptures, from their being contrary to the course of nature, is of little or no force, 142—149. The historical evidences for the genuineness, truth, and divine authority, of the scriptures, do not grow less from age to age, but rather increase, 149, 150. The prophecies delivered in the scriptures prove their divine authority, 150—157. The obscurity of the prophecies does not invalidate this proof, 157—160. The double uses and applications of the types and prophecies are no objection to the evidences deducible from them, but rather a confirmation of these evidences 160, 161. The application of the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, by the writers of the New, does not weaken the authority of these writers, but rather confirm it, 162—166. The moral characters of Christ, the prophets, and apostles, prove the truth and divine authority of the scriptures, 167—172. The excellence of the doctrines contained in the scriptures is an evidence of their divine authority, 172—174. The many advantages which have accrued to the world from the patriarchal, judaical, and christian revelations, prove the divine authority of the scriptures, 174—177. The wonderful nature, and superior excellence, of the attempt made by Christ and his apostles, are evidences of their divine authority, 177, 178. The manner in which the love of God, and of our neighbour, is taught and inculcated in the scriptures, is an evidence of their divine authority, 178—180. The doctrine of the necessary subserviency of pain to pleasure, unfolded in the scriptures, is an evidence of their divine authority, 180, 181. The mutual instrumentality of beings to each other's happiness

## CONTENTS OF THE

*piness and misery, unfolded in the scriptures, is an argument of their divine authority, 182—184. The divine authority of the scriptures may be inferred from the superior wisdom of the Jewish laws, considered in a political light, and from the exquisite workmanship shewn in the tabernacle and temple, 184. The want of universality in the publication of revealed religion, is no objection to it; but on the contrary, the time and manner in which the scriptures were written, and delivered to the world, are arguments for their divine authority, 184—187. The exclusion of all great degrees of enthusiasm and imposture from the characters of Christ, the prophets and apostles, proves their divine authority, 187—189. The reception which Christ, his fore-runners and followers, with their doctrines, have met with in all ages, is an argument of their divine authority, 189—191. The reception which false religions have met with in the world, are arguments of the truth of the christian, 191—195.*

### CHAP. III.

#### Of the RULE of LIFE.

##### SECT. I.

Of the Rule of Life, as deducible from the Practice and Opinions of Mankind.

*The practice of mankind affords some direction in respect of the rule of life, 197, 198. The opinions of mankind afford a better direction in respect of the rule of life, than their practice, 198, 199. The rule of life drawn from the practice and opinions of mankind is favourable to the cause of virtue, 199—207. This rule corrects and improves itself perpetually, 207—210.*

##### SECT.

## SECT. II.

Of the Regard due to the Pleasures and Pains of Sensation, in forming the Rule of Life.

*The pleasures of sensation ought not to be made a primary pursuit, 211—215. The pursuit of sensible pleasure ought to be regulated by the precepts of piety, benevolence, and the moral sense, 215—218. Practical rules concerning diet, 218—228. Practical rules concerning the commerce between the sexes, 228—238. Practical rules concerning the hardships, pains, and uneasinesses, which occur in the daily intercourses of life, 238—241.*

## SECT. III.

Of the Regard due to the Pleasures and Pains of Imagination in forming the Rule of Life.

*The pleasures of imagination ought not to be made a primary pursuit, 242—245. The pursuit of the pleasures of imagination ought to be regulated by the precepts of benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, 245—248. Practical rules concerning the elegancies, and amusements of life, 248—251. Practical rules concerning mirth, wit, and humour, 251—253. Practical rules concerning the polite arts, and particularly of painting, music, and poetry, 253, 254. Practical rules concerning the pursuit of science, 255, 256. Practical rules concerning the ignorance, difficulties, and perplexities, in which we find ourselves involved, 256—258.*

## SECT. IV.

Of the Regard due to the Pleasures of Honour, and the Pains of Shame, in forming the Rule of Life.

*The pleasures of honour ought not to be made a primary pursuit, 259—262. The pleasures of honour may*

may be obtained in their greatest degree, and highest perfection, by paying a strict regard to the precepts of benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, 262—264. Practical observations on the nature of humility, and the methods of attaining it, 264—270.

## SECT. V.

Of the Regard due to the Pleasures and Pains of Self-interest in forming the Rule of Life.

*The pleasures of self-interest ought not to be made a primary pursuit, 271—279. A strict regard to the precepts of benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, favours even gross self-interest, and is the only method by which the refined and rational can be secured, 279, 280. Practical observations on self-interest and self-annihilation, 280—282.*

## SECT. VI.

Of the Regard due to the Pleasures and Pains of Sympathy, in forming the Rule of Life.

*The pleasures of sympathy improve those of sensation, imagination, ambition, and self-interest; and unite with those of theopathy and the moral sense: they are self-consistent, and admit of an unlimited extent; and consequently they may be our primary pursuit, 283—290. Practical rules for augmenting the benevolent affections; and suppressing the malevolent ones, 291, 292. Practical rules for the conduct of men towards each other in society, 292—300. Of the duties arising from the principal relations of life, 301—308.*

## SECT.



## SECT. VII.

Of the Regard due to the Pleasures and Pains of Theopathy, in forming the Rule of Life.

*The love of God regulates, improves, and perfects all the other parts of our nature, and affords a pleasure superior, in kind and degree, to all the rest; and therefore is our primary pursuit, and ultimate end, 309—315. Practical rules concerning the theopathic affections, faith, fear, gratitude, hope, trust, resignation, and love, 316—330. Practical rules concerning the manner of expressing the theopathic affections by prayer, and other religious exercises, 331—336.*

## SECT. VIII.

Of the Regard due to the Pleasures and Pains of the moral Sense, in forming the Rule of Life.

*The moral sense ought to be made the immediate guide of our actions on all sudden emergencies, 337—339. Practical rules for the regulation and improvement of the moral sense, 339, 340. General corollaries to the seven last sections, 341—346.*

## SECT. IX.

Of the Rule of Faith.

*An inquiry how far faith in natural and revealed religion, also in the particular tenets of christian churches, is necessary for the purification and perfection of our natures, 347—358.*

## CHAP. IV.

Of the EXPECTATIONS of MANKIND, here and hereafter, in Consequence of their OBSERVANCE or VIOLATION of the RULE of LIFE.

## SECT. I.

Of the Expectation of Individuals in the present Life.

*It is probable, that most or all men receive more happiness than misery, in their passage through the present life, 359—361. The balance cannot be much in favour even of the most happy, during the present life, 361—363. Virtue has always the fairest prospect even in this life, and vice is always exposed to the greatest hazards, 363. And yet it does not seem at all probable, that happiness is exactly proportioned to virtue in the present life, 364, 365.*

## SECT. II.

Of the Expectation of Bodies Politic, the Jews in particular, and the World in general, during the present State of the Earth.

*It is probable, that all the present civil governments will be overturned, 366—370. It is probable, that the present forms of church-government will be dissolved,*



*solved, 370—372. It is probable, that the Jews will be restored to Palæstine, 373—375. The christian religion will be preached to, and received, by all nations, 376—380. It is not probable, that there will be any pure or complete happiness before the destruction of this world by fire, 380, 381.*

### SECT. III.

Of a future State after the Expiration of this Life.

*It is probable, from the mere light of nature, that there will be a future state, 382—392. The christian revelation gives us an absolute assurance of a future state, 393—395. The rewards and punishments of a future life will far exceed the happiness and misery of this, both in degree and duration, 395—397. It is probable, that the future happiness of the good will be of a spiritual nature; but the future misery of the wicked may be both corporeal and mental, 397—402. It seems probable, that the soul may remain in a state of inactivity, though perhaps not of insensibility, from death to the resurrection, 402, 403.*

### SECT. IV.

Of the Terms of Salvation.

*It follows from the foregoing theory of our intellectual pleasures and pains, as well as from other ways of considering them, that the bulk of mankind are not qualified for pure, unmixed happiness, 404, 405. It follows from the declarations of the scriptures, that the bulk of mankind are not qualified for the mansions of the blessed,*

405—407. *A practical application of this doctrine to the real circumstances of mankind, 407—418.*

## SECT. V.

Of the final Happiness of all Mankind in some distant future State.

*It is probable from reason, that all mankind will be made happy ultimately, 419—425. It is probable from the scriptures, that all mankind will be made happy ultimately, 426—437.*

CONCLUSION, 438.

OBSER-

# OBSERVATIONS

ON

M A N, &c.

---

IN TWO PARTS.

---

## PART II.

*Containing* OBSERVATIONS *on the* DUTY *and*  
EXPECTATIONS *of* MANKIND.

.....

### INTRODUCTION.

W HATEVER be our doubts, fears, or anxieties, whether selfish or social, whether for time or eternity, our only hope and refuge must be in the infinite power, knowledge, and goodness of God. And if these be really our hope and refuge, if we have a true practical sense and conviction of God's infinite ability and readiness to protect and bless us, an entire, peaceful, happy resignation will be the result, notwithstanding the clouds and perplexities wherewith we may sometimes be encompassed. He who has brought us into this state, will conduct us through it: he knows all our wants and distresses: his infinite nature will

VOL. II.

B

bear

bear down all opposition from our impotence, ignorance, vice, or misery: he is our creator, judge, and king, our friend, and father, and God.

And though the transcendent greatness and gloriousness of this prospect may, at first view, make our faith stagger, and incline us to disbelieve through joy; yet, upon farther consideration, it seems rather to confirm and establish itself on that account; for the more it exceeds our gratitude and comprehension, the more does it coincide with the idea of that absolutely perfect being, whom the several orders of imperfect beings perpetually suggest to us, as our only resting place, the cause of causes, and the supreme reality.

However, on the other hand, it must be acknowledged, that the evils which we see and feel are strong arguments of the possibility of still greater evils, of any finite evils whatever, and of their consistency with the divine attributes. All finites are equally nothing in respect of infinite; and if the infinite power, knowledge, and goodness of God can permit the least evil, they may permit any finite degree of it, how great soever, for any thing that we know to the contrary. And this most alarming consideration cannot but compel every thinking person to use his utmost endeavours, first for his own preservation and deliverance; and then, in proportion to his benevolence, for the preservation and deliverance of others.

Nor can such a person long hesitate what method to take in the general. The duties of piety, benevolence, and self-government, considered in the general, have had such a stamp set upon them by all ages and nations, by all orders and conditions of men, approve themselves so much to our frame and constitution, and are so evidently conducive to both public and private happiness here, that one cannot doubt of their procuring for us not only security, but our *summum bonum*, our greatest possible happiness, during

during the whole course of our existence, whatever that be.

These are the genuine dictates of what is called natural religion. But we, who live in christian countries, may have recourse to far clearer light, and to a more definite rule: the christian revelation is attested by such evidences historical, prophetic, and moral, as will give abundant comfort and satisfaction to all who seek them earnestly. A future life, with indefinite, or even infinite, rewards and punishments, is set before us in express terms, the conditions declared, examples related both to encourage our hopes, and alarm our fears, and assurances of assistance and mercy delivered in the strongest and most pathetic terms.

Yet still there are difficulties both in the word of God, and in his works; and these difficulties are sometimes so magnified, as to lead to scepticism, infidelity, or atheism. Now, the contemplation of our own frame and constitution appears to me to have a peculiar tendency to lessen these difficulties attending natural and revealed religion, and to improve their evidences, as well as to concur with them in their determination of man's duty and expectations. With this view, I drew up the foregoing observations on the frame and connection of the body and mind; and, in prosecution of the same design, I now propose,

First, To proceed upon this foundation, and upon the other phænomena of nature to deduce the evidences for the being and attributes of God, and the general truths of natural religion.

Secondly, Laying down all these as a new foundation, to deduce the evidences for revealed religion.

Thirdly, To inquire into the rule of life, and the particular applications of it, which result from the frame of our natures, the dictates of natural religion, and the precepts of the scriptures taken

together, compared with, and casting light upon each other. And,

Fourthly, To inquire into the genuine doctrines of natural and revealed religion thus illustrated, concerning the expectations of mankind, here and hereafter, in consequence of their observance or violation of the rule of life.

I do not presume to give a complete treatise on any of these subjects; but only to borrow from the many excellent writings, which have been offered to the world on them, some of the principal evidences and deductions, and to accommodate them to the foregoing theory of the mind; whereby it may appear, that though the doctrines of association and mechanism do make some alterations in the method of reasoning on religion, yet they are far from lessening either the evidences for it, the comfort and joy of religious persons, or the fears of irreligious ones.



# OBSERVATIONS

ON

M A N,

HIS FRAME, HIS DUTY, AND HIS EXPECTATIONS.

---

## CHAP. I.

*Of the BEING and ATTRIBUTES of GOD, and of  
NATURAL RELIGION.*

### PROP. I.

*Something must have existed from all Eternity; or, there  
never was a Time when Nothing existed.*

FOR, when we place ourselves in such an imaginary point of time, and then try to conceive how a world, finite or infinite, should begin to exist, absolutely without cause, we find an instantaneous and irresistible check put to the conception, and we are compelled at once to reject the supposition: so that the manner in which we reject it, is a proper authority for doing so. It is superfluous, in this case, to inquire into the nature of this check and rejection, and dissent grounded thereon; since, after all our inquiries, we must still find an insuperable reluctance to assent. The supposition will not remain in the mind, but is

thrown out immediately; and I do not speak of this, as what ought to follow from a proper theory of evidence and assent, but as a fact, which every man feels, whatever his notions of logic be, or whether he has any or no; and I appeal to every man for the truth of this fact. Now, no truth can have a greater reality to us, nor any falsehood a greater evidence against it, than this instantaneous, necessary assent or dissent. I conclude, therefore, that there never was a time when nothing existed; or, in other words, that something must have existed from all eternity.

## P R O P. II.

*There cannot have been a mere Succession of finite dependent Beings from all Eternity; but there must exist, at least, one infinite and independent Being.*

IF an infinite succession of finite dependent beings be possible, let *M*, *N*, *O*, &c. represent the several links of this chain or series; *N* is therefore the mere effect of *M*, *O* of *N*, &c. as we descend; and as we ascend, *M* is the effect of *L*, *L* of *K*, &c. Each particular being, therefore, is a mere effect; and therefore the supposition of such a succession finite *à parte ante*, would be rejected immediately according to the last proposition, since *A* the first term, would be an effect absolutely without a cause. And the same thing holds, whatever number of terms be added *à parte ante*. If, therefore, an infinite number be added (which I here suppose possible for argument's sake), so that the series may become infinite *à parte ante*, the same conclusion must be valid according to the analogy of all mathematical reasonings

sonings concerning infinites: since we do not approach to the possibility of this series in any step of our progress, but always remain in the same state of utter inability to admit it, we can never arrive thither ultimately. Wherever the ultimate ratio of quantities, supposed then to be infinitely great or small, is different from that of the same quantities supposed to be finite, there is a perpetual tendency to this ultimate ratio in every increase or diminution of the quantities: it follows, therefore, that an infinite succession of mere finite dependent beings is impossible to us; which relative impossibility, as I observed before, is our *ne plus ultra*. Though we should fancy relative impossibles to be possible *in themselves*, as it is sometimes phrased, the utter rejection, which forces itself again and again upon the mind, when we endeavour to conceive them so, suppresses all nascent tendencies to assent.

The same thing may be considered thus: if there be nothing more in the universe than a mere succession of finite dependent beings, then there is some degree of finiteness superior to all the rest; but this is impossible, since no cause can be assigned for this degree rather than any other: besides, this supreme finite being will want a cause of its existence, since it is finite; which yet it cannot have, since all the rest are inferior to it.

Or thus: if an infinite succession of finite beings be possible, let us suppose it in men: it will be necessary, however, to suppose one or more beings superior to man, on account of the exquisiteness of his frame of body and mind, which is far above his own power to execute, and capacity to comprehend: and if this being or beings be not infinite, we must have recourse to a second infinite succession of finite beings. But then it will be natural to suppose, that these beings, though able to comprehend man through their superior faculties, cannot compre-

hend themselves, and so on till we come to an infinite being, who alone can comprehend himself.

There are many other arguments and methods of reasoning of the same kind with those here delivered, which lead to the same conclusion; and they all seem to turn upon this, that as all finite beings require a superior cause for their existence and faculties, so they point to an infinite one, as the only real cause, himself being uncaused. He is, therefore, properly denominated independent, self-existent, and necessarily existent; terms which import nothing more, when applied to the Deity, than the denial of a foreign cause of his existence and attributes; notwithstanding that these words, on account of their different derivations, and relations to other words, may seem to have a different import, when applied to the Deity.

If it be objected, that a cause is required for an infinite being, as well as for a finite one; I answer, that though the want of a cause for finite beings, with other arguments to the same purpose, leads us necessarily to the consideration and admission of an infinite one; yet, when we are arrived there, we are utterly unable to think or speak properly of him: however, one would rather judge, that, for the same reason that all finiteness requires a cause, infinity is incompatible with it.

If it be supposed possible for a man, through logical and metaphysical perplexities, or an unhappy turn of mind, not to see the force of these and such like reasonings, he must, however, be at least *in equilibrio* between the two opposite suppositions of the proposition, viz. that of an infinite succession of finite dependent beings, and that of an infinite independent being. In this case, the testimony of all ages and nations, from whatever cause it arises, and of the scriptures, in favour of the last supposition, ought to have some weight, since some credi-  
bility



bility must be due to these, in whatever light they be considered. If, therefore, they have no weight, this may serve to shew a man, that he is not so perfectly *in equilibrio*, as he may fancy.

This proposition will also be confirmed by the following. My chief design under it has been to produce the abstract metaphysical arguments for the existence of an infinite independent being. Some of these are more satisfactory to one person, some to another; but in all there is something of perplexity and doubt concerning the exact propriety of expressions, and method of reasoning, and perhaps ever will be; since the subject is infinite, and we finite. I have given what appears most satisfactory to myself; but without the least intention to censure the labours of others upon this important subject. If we understood one another perfectly, not only our conclusions, but our methods of arriving at them, would probably appear to coincide. In the meantime, mutual candour will be of great use for the preventing the ill effects of this branch of the confusion of tongues.

### P R O P. III.

*The infinite independent Being is endued with infinite Power and Knowledge.*

THIS Proposition follows from the foregoing; it being evident, that most or all the ways there delivered, or referred to, for proving an infinite being, do, at the same time, prove the infinity of his power and knowledge. To suppose a being without any power, or any knowledge, is, in effect, to take away his existence, after it has been allowed. And to suppose an infinite being with only finite power, or finite knowledge, is so dissonant to the analogy of language, and of the received method of reasoning, that it must be rejected by the mind.

But

But the infinity of the divine power and knowledge may also be proved in many independent ways, and these proofs may be extended, in a contrary order, to infer the foregoing proposition.

Thus, First; When a man considers the several orders of sentient and intelligent beings below him, even in the most transient way, and asks himself whether or no mankind be the highest order which exists within the whole *compass of nature*, as we term it, he cannot but resolve this question in the negative; he cannot but be persuaded, that there are beings of a power and knowledge superior to his own, as well as inferior. The idea, the internal feeling, of the actual existence of such beings forces itself upon the mind, adheres inseparably to, and coalesces with, the reflection upon the inferior orders of beings, which he sees. Farther, as we can perceive no limits set to the descending scale, so it is natural, even at first view, to imagine, that neither has the ascending scale any limits; or, in other words, that there actually exists one, or more beings, endued with infinite power and knowledge.

Secondly, When we contemplate the innumerable instances and evidences of boundless power, and exquisite skill, which appear every where in the organs and faculties of animals, in the make and properties of the vegetable and mineral kingdoms, in the earth, water, and air of this globe, in the heavenly bodies, in light, gravity, electricity, magnetism, the attraction of cohesion, &c. &c. with the manifest adaptations and subserviencies of all these things to each other, in such manner as to shew both the most perfect knowledge of them, and of all their properties, and the most absolute command over them; when we consider also that vast extent of these effects of power and knowledge, which telescopes, microscopes, and the daily observations and experiments of mankind, open to our view; the real  
existence,



existence, first, of power and knowledge far beyond human conception, and then, of those that are actually infinite, forces itself upon the mind, by the close connection and indissoluble union between the several ideas here mentioned.

For, Thirdly, Though no finite being can comprehend more than the finite effects of power and knowledge; nay, though to suppose infinite effects, *i. e.* an infinite universe, is thought by some to involve a contradiction, to be the same thing as supposing an actually infinite number; yet it appears to me, that the other branch of the dilemma repels us with the greatest force. To suppose a finite universe, is to suppose a stop where the mind cannot rest; we shall always ask for a cause of this finiteness, and, not finding any, reject the supposition. Now, if the universe be supposed infinite, this proves at once the absolute infinity of the divine power and knowledge, provided we allow them to follow in a finite degree, from the finite evidences of power and knowledge, in that part of the universe which is presented to our view.

As to the foregoing objection to the infinity of the universe, we may observe, that it arises merely from the finiteness of our comprehensions. We can have no conception of any thing infinite, nor of the possibility that any other being, conceived by us, can conceive this, &c. &c. But all this vanishes, when we come to consider, that there actually is, that there necessarily must be, an infinite being. This being may conceive his own infinite works, and he alone can do it. His own infinite nature, which we cannot but admit, is as much above conception as the infinity of his works. And all apparent contradictions, in these things, seem to flow merely from our using the words denoting infinity, of which we can neither have any idea, nor any definition, but by equivalent terms, like those words of which we have  
ideas

ideas or definitions. In the same manner as when the conditions of an algebraic problem are impossible, the unknown quantity comes out indeed by the resolution of the equation under an algebraic form, as in other cases; but then this form, when examined, is found to include an impossibility.

As the infinity of the divine power and knowledge may be deduced from that of the universe, so the last may be deduced from the first, supposed to be proved by other arguments. And it may be observed in general, upon all inquiries into this subject, that the mind cannot bear to suppose either God or his works finite, however unable we may be to think or speak of them properly, when they are supposed to be infinite.

Fourthly, As it appears from the train of reasoning used in this and the foregoing proposition, that an infinite being is absolutely necessary for the existence of the visible world, as its creator; so the consideration of this leads us to the infinity of his power and knowledge. The things created must be merely passive, and subject entirely to the will of him who created them. In like manner, all the powers and properties of created things, with all the results of these, in their mutual applications, through all eternity, must be known to him. And this follows in whatever manner we consider creation, of which we can certainly form no just idea. It is evident, as just now mentioned, that an author of this world is absolutely required; also, that this author must have been from all eternity. It is therefore most natural for us to conclude, that there have been infinite effects of his almighty power from all eternity. But then this does not exclude creations in time, I mean of things made from nothing. For it seems to me, that our narrow faculties cannot afford us the least foundation for supposing the creation of things from nothing impossible to God.

Lastly,

Lastly, There is a great accession of evidence for the infinity of the divine power and knowledge, and for the creation of all things by God, and their entire subjection to him, from the declarations of the scriptures to this purpose. This accession of evidence can scarce be necessary in this age; but, in the infancy of the world, revelation seems to have been the chief or only foundation of faith in any of the divine attributes. And even now, it cannot but be matter of the greatest comfort and satisfaction to all good men, to have an independent evidence for these important truths; and that more especially, if their minds have been at all perplexed with the metaphysical disputes and subtleties, which are often started on these subjects.

#### P R O P. IV.

*God is infinitely benevolent.*

As all the natural attributes of God may be comprehended under power and knowledge, so benevolence seems to comprehend all the moral ones. This proposition therefore, and the foregoing, contain the fundamentals of all that reason can discover to us concerning the divine nature and attributes.

Now, in inquiring into the evidences for the divine benevolence, I observe, first, that as we judge of the divine power and knowledge by their effects in the constitution of the visible world, so we must judge of the divine benevolence in the same way. Our arguments for it must be taken from the happiness, and tendencies thereto, that are observable in the sentient beings, which come under our notice.

Secondly, That the misery, to which we see sentient beings exposed, does not destroy the evidences for the divine benevolence, taken from happiness, unless we suppose the misery equal or superior to the happiness. A being who receives three degrees of happiness,

happiness, and but one of misery, is indebted for two degrees of happiness to his Creator. Hence our inquiry into the divine benevolence is reduced to an inquiry into the balance of happiness, or misery, conferred, or to be conferred, upon the whole system of sentient beings, and upon each individual of this great system. If there be reason to believe, that the happiness which each individual has received, or will receive, be greater than his misery, God will be benevolent to each being, and infinitely so to the whole infinite system of sentient beings; if the balance be infinitely in favour of each individual, God will be infinitely benevolent to each, and infinitely to the whole system.

It is no objection to this reasoning, that we desire pure happiness, and prefer it to an equal balance of happiness mixed with misery; or that the consideration of misery, amidst the works of an infinitely benevolent being, gives us perplexity. For this disappointment of our desires, and this perplexity, can amount to no more than finite evils, to be deducted from the sum total of happiness; and our obligations to the author of our beings must always be in proportion to this remaining sum. We may add, that as this disappointment and perplexity are sources of misery at present, they may, in their future consequences, be much ampler sources of happiness; and that this seems to be the natural result of supposing, that happiness prevails over misery.

Thirdly, Since the qualities of benevolence and malevolence are as opposite to one another, as happiness and misery, their effects, they cannot co-exist in the same simple unchangeable being. If therefore we can prove God to be benevolent, from the balance of happiness, malevolence must be entirely excluded; and we must suppose the evils, which we see and feel, to be owing to some other cause, however unable we  
may



may be to assign this cause, or form any conceptions of it.

Fourthly, Since God is infinite in power and knowledge, *i. e.* in his natural attributes, he must be infinite in the moral one also, *i. e.* he must be either infinitely benevolent, or infinitely malevolent. All arguments, therefore, which exclude infinite malevolence, prove the infinite benevolence of God.

Lastly, As there are some difficulties and perplexities which attend the proofs of the divine self-existence, power, and knowledge, so it is natural to expect, that others equal, greater, or less, should attend the consideration of the divine benevolence. But here again revelation comes in aid of reason, and affords inexpressible satisfaction to all earnest and well-disposed persons, even in this age, after natural philosophy, and the knowledge of natural religion, have been so far advanced. In the early ages of the world, divine revelation must have been, almost the only influencing evidence of the moral attributes of God.

Let us now come to the evidences for the divine benevolence, and its infinity.

First, then, It appears probable, that there is an over-balance of happiness to the sentient beings of this visible world, considered both generally and particularly. For though disorder, pain, and death, do very much abound every where in the world, yet beauty, order, pleasure, life, and happiness, seem to superabound. This is indeed impossible to be ascertained by any exact computation. However, it is the general opinion of mankind, which is some kind of proof of the thing itself. For since we are inclined to think, that happiness or misery prevails, according as we ourselves are happy or miserable (which both experience, and the foregoing doctrine of association, shew), the general prevalence of the opinion of happiness is an argument of the general

general prevalence of the thing itself. Add to this, that the recollection of places, persons, &c. which we have formerly known, is in general pleasant to us. Now recollection is only the compound vestige of all the pleasures and pains, which have been associated with the object under consideration. It seems therefore, that the balance must have been in favour of pleasure. And yet it may be, that small or moderate actual pains are in recollection turned into pleasures. But then this will become an argument, in another way, for the prevalence of the pleasures, and particularly of those of recollection, *i. e.* mental ones. It appears also, that the growth and health of the body infer the general prevalence of happiness, whilst they continue. Afterwards, the mental happiness may over-balance the bodily misery.

Secondly, If we should lay down, that there is just as much misery as happiness in the world (more can scarce be supposed by any one), it will follow, that if the laws of benevolence were to take place in a greater degree than they do at present, misery would perpetually decrease, and happiness increase, till, at last, by the unlimited growth of benevolence, the state of mankind, in this world, would approach to a paradisiacal one. Now, this shews that our miseries are, in a great measure, owing to our want of benevolence, *i. e.* to our moral imperfections, and to that which, according to our present language, we do and must call *ourselves*. It is probable therefore, that, upon a more accurate examination and knowledge of this subject, we should find, that our miseries arose not only in great measure, but entirely, from this source, from the imperfection of our benevolence, whilst all that is good comes immediately from God, who must therefore be deemed perfectly benevolent. And since the course of the world, and the frame of our natures are so ordered, and so adapted to each other, as to enforce benevolence upon us, this is a  
farther



farther argument of the kind intentions of an overruling Providence. It follows hence, that malevolence, and consequently misery, must ever decrease.

Thirdly, All the faculties, corporeal and mental, of all animals, are, as far as we can judge, contrived and adapted both to the preservation and well-being of each individual, and to the propagation of the species. And there is an infinite coincidence of all the several subordinate ends with each other, so that no one is sacrificed to the rest, but they are all obtained in the utmost perfection by one and the same means. This is a strong argument for all the divine perfections, power, knowledge, and goodness. And it agrees with it, that final causes, *i. e.* natural good, are the best clue for guiding the invention in all attempts to explain the œconomy of animals.

Fourthly, As order and happiness prevail in general more than their contraries, so when any disorder, bodily or mental, does happen, one may observe, in general, that it produces some consequences, which in the end rectify the original disorder; and the instances where disorders propagate and increase themselves without visible limits, are comparatively rare. Nay, it may be, that all the apparent ones of this kind are really otherwise; and that they would appear otherwise, were our views sufficiently extensive.

Fifthly, The whole analogy of nature leads us from the consideration of the infinite power and knowledge of God, and of his being the creator of all things, to regard him as our father, protector, governor, and judge. We cannot therefore but immediately hope and expect from him benevolence, justice, equity, mercy, bounty, truth, and all possible moral perfections. Men of great speculation and refinement may desire to have this analogical reasoning supported, and shewn to be valid; and it is very useful to do this as far as we are able. But it

carries great influence previously to such logical inquiries; and even after them, though they should not prove satisfactory, a person of a sober and well-disposed mind, would still find himself affected by it in no inconsiderable degree. Such a person would be compelled, as it were, to fly to the infinite creator of the world in his distresses, with earnestness, and with some degree of faith, and would consider him as his father and protector.

Sixthly, Whenever we come to examine any particular law, fact, circumstance, &c. in the natural or moral world, where we have a competent information and knowledge, we find that every thing which has been, was right in respect of the sum total of happiness; and that when we suppose any change to have been made, which appears, at first sight, likely to produce more happiness; yet, after some reflection, the consideration of some other things necessarily influenced by such a change, convinces us, that the present real constitution of things is best upon the whole. Books of natural history and natural philosophy, and indeed daily observation, furnish abundant instances of this; so as to shew, that, other things remaining the same, every single thing is the most conducive to general happiness, that it can be according to the best of our judgments. And though our judgments are so short and imperfect, that this cannot pass for an absolutely conclusive evidence, yet it is very remarkable, that these imperfect judgments of ours should lie constantly on the same side. We have no reason to suppose, that a better acquaintance with things would give us cause to alter it, but far otherwise, as appears from the universal consent of all that are inquisitive and learned in these matters. And if there were a few objections in the other scale (which I believe philosophers will scarce allow), they can, at the utmost, have no more than the same imperfect judgment to rest upon.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, Supposing that every single thing is, other things remaining the same, the most conducive to happiness that it can be, then the real deficiencies that are found in respect of happiness, and which, at first sight, appear to arise from a proportional deficiency in the divine benevolence, may be equally ascribed to a deficiency in the divine power or knowledge. For this wonderful, precise, minute adaptation of every thing to each other is such an argument for benevolence in the most unbounded sense, that one would rather ascribe, whatever disorders there are in the universe, to some necessary imperfection in things themselves, surpassing, if possible, the divine power or knowledge to rectify; this appearing to be the weaker side of the dilemma.

By a single thing in the two foregoing paragraphs, I mean one that is so comparatively; so that I call not only a single part of an animal (which yet is a thing compounded, perhaps without limits), but a whole system of animals, when compared with other systems, a single thing. Now, to ask whether happiness could not be promoted, if the whole universe was changed, is absurd; since it is probable, from what is already offered, that the happiness of the universe is always infinitely great; the infinity of the divine power and knowledge requiring infinite benevolence, *i. e.* the infinite happiness of the creation, if benevolence be at all supposed a divine attribute, as has been noted before.

Eighthly, Since the apparent defects that are in happiness may, according to the last paragraph but one, be equally referred to some supposed defect in one of the principal attributes of power, knowledge, or goodness, it does even from hence appear probable, that these defects are not owing to any defect in any of them, *i. e.* that there are no such defects in reality, but that all our difficulties and perplexities in these matters arise from some misapprehension of

our own, in things that infinitely surpass our capacities; this supposition, whatever reluctance we may have to it, being far the most easy and consistent of any.

Ninthly, I remarked above, that the exclusion of infinite malevolence from the divine nature, does itself prove the infinite benevolence of God. Let us see what arguments there are for this exclusion. Now, malevolence always appears to us under the idea of imperfection and misery; and therefore infinite malevolence must appear to us to be infinitely inconsistent with the infinite power and knowledge proved, in the foregoing proposition, to belong to the divine nature. For the same reasons, infinite benevolence which always appears to us under the idea of perfection and happiness, seems to be the immediate and necessary consequence of the natural attributes of infinite power and knowledge: since the wishing good to others, and the endeavouring to procure it for them, is, in us, generally attended with a pleasurable state of mind, we cannot but apply this observation to the divine nature, in the same manner that we do those made upon our own power and knowledge. And to deny us the liberty of doing this in the first case, would be to take it away in the last, and consequently to reduce us to the absurd and impossible supposition, that there is no power or knowledge in the universe superior to our own.

Tenthly, Malevolence may also be excluded in the following manner: If we suppose a system of beings to be placed in such a situation, as that they may occasion either much happiness, or much misery, to each other, it will follow, that the scale will turn more and more perpetually in favour of the production of happiness; for the happiness which *A* receives from *B*, will lead him by association to love *B*, and to wish and endeavour *B*'s happiness, in return: *B* will therefore have a motive, arising from his  
desire



desire of his own happiness, to continue his good offices to *A*: whereas the misery that *A* receives from *B*, will lead him to hate *B*, and to deter him from farther injuries. This must necessarily be the case, if we only admit, that every intelligent being is actuated by the view of private happiness, and that his memory and trains of ideas are of the same kind with ours. Now, the first supposition cannot be doubted, and to exclude the last would be to forbid all reasoning upon other intelligent beings: not to mention, that these two suppositions cannot, perhaps, be separated, since the desire of happiness seems in us to be the mere result of association, as above explained; and association itself the general law, according to which the intellectual world is framed and conducted. Now this different tendency of benevolence and malevolence, viz. of the first to augment itself without limits, of the latter to destroy itself ultimately, appears to be a very strong argument for the infinite benevolence of God. For, according to this, benevolence must arise in all beings, other things being alike, in proportion to their experience of good and evil, and to their knowledge of causes and effects. One cannot doubt, therefore, but that infinite benevolence is inseparably connected with the supreme intelligence: all the higher orders of intellectual beings have, probably, higher degrees of it, in the general, and accidental differences, as we call them, being allowed for; and therefore the highest intelligence, the infinite mind, must have it in an infinite degree; and as every degree of benevolence becomes a proportional source of happiness to the benevolent, so the infinite benevolence of the supreme Being is the same thing with his infinite perfection and happiness. In like manner, the contemplation of the infinite perfection and happiness of God is an inexhaustible treasure of happiness to all his benevolent and devout creatures; and he is infinitely benevolent to them,

in giving them such faculties, as by their natural workings, make them take pleasure in this contemplation of his infinite happiness.

Eleventhly, A reason may be given not only consistent with the infinite benevolence of God, but even arising from it, why some doubts and perplexities should always attend our inquiries into it, and arguments for it, provided only that we suppose our present frame to remain such as it is; for it appears from the frame of our natures, as I shall shew hereafter, and was hinted in the last paragraph, that our ultimate happiness must consist in the pure and perfect love of God; and yet, that, admitting the present frame of our natures, our love of God can never be made pure and perfect without a previous fear of him. In like manner, we do, and must, upon our entrance into this world, begin with the idolatry of external things, and, as we advance in it, proceed to the idolatry of ourselves; which yet are insuperable bars to a complete happiness in the love of God. Now, our doubts concerning the divine benevolence teach us to set a much higher value upon it, when we have found it, or begin to hope that we have; our fears enhance our hopes, and nascent love; and altogether mortify our love for the world, and our interested concern for ourselves, and particularly that part of it which seeks a complete demonstration of the divine benevolence, and its infinity, from a mere selfish motive; till at last we arrive at an entire annihilation of ourselves, and an absolute acquiescence and complacency in the will of God, which afford the only full answer to all our doubts, and the only radical cure for all our evils and perplexities.

Twelfthly, It is probable, that many good reasons might be given, why the frame of our natures should be as it is at present, all consistent with, or even flowing from, the benevolence of the divine nature; and yet



yet still that some supposition must be made, in which the same difficulty would again recur, only in a less degree. However, if we suppose this to be the case, the difficulty of reconciling evil with the goodness of God might be diminished without limits, in the same manner as mathematical quantities are exhausted by the terms of an infinite series. It agrees with this, that as long as any evil remains, this difficulty, which is one species of evil, must remain in a proportional degree; for it would be inconsistent to suppose any one species to vanish before the rest. However, if God be infinitely benevolent, they must all decrease without limits, and consequently this difficulty, as just now remarked. In the mean time, we must not extend this supposition of evil, and of the difficulty of accounting for it, to the whole creation: we are no judges of such matters; and the scriptures may, perhaps, be thought rather to intimate, that the mixture of good and evil is peculiar to us, than common to the universe, in the account which they give of the sin of our first parents, in eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Thirteenthly, Some light may, perhaps be cast upon this most difficult subject of the origin of evil, if we lay down the several notions of infinite goodness, which offer themselves to the mind, and compare them with one another, and with the appearances of things. Let us suppose then, that we may call that infinite benevolence, which makes either.

1. Each individual infinitely happy always. Or,
2. Each individual always finitely happy, without any mixture of misery, and infinitely so in its progress through infinite time. Or,
3. Each individual infinitely happy, upon the balance, in its progress through infinite time, but with a mixture of misery. Or,
4. Each individual finitely happy in the course of its existence, whatever that be, but with a mixture

of misery as before ; and the universe infinitely happy upon the balance. Or,

5. Some individuals happy and some miserable upon the balance, finitely or infinitely, and yet so that there shall be an infinite overplus of happiness in the universe.

All possible notions of infinite benevolence may, I think, be reduced to some one of these five ; and there are some persons who think, that the infinity of the divine benevolence may be vindicated upon the last and lowest of these suppositions. Let us consider each particularly.

The first, viz. That each individual should be always happy infinitely, is not only contrary to the fact at first view, but also seems impossible, as being inconsistent with the finite nature of the creatures. We reject it therefore as soon as proposed, and do not expect, that the divine benevolence should be proved infinite in this sense. And yet were each individual always finitely happy according to the next supposition, we should always be inclined to ask why he had not a greater finite degree of happiness conferred upon him, notwithstanding the manifest absurdity of such a question, which must thus recur again and again for ever.

The second supposition is that which is most natural as a mere supposition. We think that pure benevolence can give nothing but pure happiness, and infinite benevolence must give infinite happiness. But it is evidently contrary to the fact, to what we see and feel, and therefore we are forced, though with great unwillingness, to give up this notion also. It may, however, be some comfort to us, that if we could keep this, the same temper of mind which makes us prefer it to the next, would suggest the question, *Why not more happiness?* again and again for ever, as just now remarked ; so that we should not be satisfied with it, unless our tempers were also altered. This, indeed,

indeed, would be the case, because, as I observed before, all the specieses of evil and imperfection must vanish together. But then this consideration, by shewing that the endless recurrency of the question above-mentioned, and the concomitant dissatisfaction, are imperfections in us, shews at the same time, that they are no proper foundation for an objection to the divine benevolence.

The third supposition is possible in itself; but then it can neither be supported, nor contradicted, by the facts. If there appear an unlimited tendency towards the prevalence of happiness over misery, this may be some presumption for it. But all our judgments, and even conjectures, are confined within a short distance from the present moment. A divine revelation might give us an assurance of it. And it seems, that this supposition is, upon an impartial view, equally eligible and satisfactory with the foregoing. We estimate every quantity by the balance, by what remains after a subtraction of its opposite; and if this be an allowed authentic method, in the several kinds of happiness, why not in happiness considered in the abstract? But we must not conclude that this is the genuine notion of the divine benevolence. There may perhaps be some presumptions for it, both from reason and scripture; but I think none, in the present infancy of knowledge, sufficient to ground an opinion upon. However, there seem to be no possible presumptions against it; and this may encourage us to search both the book of God's word, and that of his works, for matter of comfort to ourselves, and arguments whereby to represent his moral character in the most amiable light.

The fourth supposition is one to which many thinking, serious, benevolent, and pious persons are now much inclined. All the arguments here used for the divine benevolence, and its infinity, seem to infer it, or, if they favour any of the other suppositions,

sitions, to favour the third, which may be said to include this fourth. There are also many declarations in the scriptures concerning the goodness, bounty, and mercy of God to all his creatures, which can scarce be interpreted in a lower sense.

As to the fifth supposition, therefore, it follows, that it is opposed by the preceding arguments, *i. e.* by the marks and footsteps of God's goodness in the creation, and by the declarations of the scriptures to the same purpose. However, there are a few passages of scripture, from whence some very learned and devout men still continue to draw this fifth supposition; they do also endeavour to make this supposition consistent with the divine benevolence, by making a farther supposition, *viz.* that of philosophical liberty, as it is called in these observations, or the power of doing different things, the previous circumstances remaining the same. And it is highly incumbent upon us to be humble and diffident in the judgments which we make upon matters of such importance to us, and so much above our capacities. However, it does not appear to many other learned and devout persons, either that the scripture passages alluded to are a proper foundation for this opinion, or that of philosophical free-will, though allowed, can afford a sufficient vindication of the divine attributes.

These observations seem naturally to occur, upon considering these five suppositions, and comparing them with one another, and with the word and works of God. But there is also another way of considering the third supposition, which, as it is a presumption for it, though not an evidence, agreeably to what was intimated above, I shall here offer to the reader.

First then, Association has an evident tendency to convert a state of superior happiness, mixed with inferior misery, into one of pure happiness, into a paradisiacal one, as has been shewn in the first part of these



these observations, *Prop. 14. Cor. 9.* Or, in other words, association tends to convert the state of the third supposition into that of the second.

Secondly, When any small pain is introductory to a great pleasure, it is very common for us, without any express reflection on the power of association, to consider this pain as coalescing with the subsequent pleasure, into a pure pleasure, equal to the difference between them; and, in some cases, the small pain itself puts on the nature of a pleasure, of which we see many instances in the daily occurrences of life, where labour, wants, pains, become actually pleasant to us, by a lustre borrowed from the pleasures to be obtained by them. And this happens most particularly, when we recollect the events of our past lives, or view those of others. It is to be observed also, that this power of uniting different and opposite sensations into one increases as we advance in life, and in our intellectual capacities; and that, strictly speaking, no sensation can be a monad, inasmuch as the most simple are infinitely divisible in respect of time and extent of impression. Those, therefore, which are esteemed the purest pleasures, may contain some parts which afford pain; and, conversely, were our capacities sufficiently enlarged, any sensations connected to each other in the way of cause and effect, would be esteemed one sensation, and be denominated a pure pleasure, if pleasure prevailed upon the whole.

Thirdly, As the enlargement of our capacities enables us thus to take off the edge of our pains, by uniting them with the subsequent superior pleasures, so it confers upon us more and more the power of enjoying our future pleasures by anticipation, by extending the limits of the present time, *i. e.* of that time in which we have an interest. For the present time, in a metaphysical sense, is an indivisible moment; but the present time, in a practical sense, is a finite

finite quantity of various magnitudes; according to our capacities, and, beginning from an indivisible moment in all, seems to grow on indefinitely in beings who are ever progressive in their passage through an eternal life.

Suppose now a being of great benevolence, and enlarged intellectual capacities, to look down upon mankind passing through a mixture of pleasures and pains, in which, however, there is a balance of pleasure, to a greater balance of pleasure perpetually, and, at last, to a state of pure and exalted pleasure made so by association: it is evident, that his benevolence to man will be the source of pure pleasure to him from his power of uniting the opposite sensations, and of great present pleasure from his power of anticipation. And the more we suppose the benevolence and capacities of this being enlarged, the greater and more pure will his sympathetic pleasure be, which arises from the contemplation of man. It follows therefore, that, in the eye of an infinite mind, creatures conducted, as we think, according to the third of the foregoing suppositions, are conducted according to the second, and these according to the first; or, in other words, that the first, second, and third, of the foregoing suppositions, are all one and the same in the eye of God. For all time, whether past, present, or future, is present time in the eye of God, and all ideas coalesce into one to him; and this one is infinite happiness, without any mixture of misery, viz. by the infinite prepollence of happiness above misery, so as to annihilate it; and this merely by considering time as it ought to be considered in strictness, *i. e.* as a relative thing, belonging to beings of finite capacities, and varying with them, but which is infinitely absorbed in the pure eternity of God. Now the appearance of things to the eye of an infinite being must be called their real appearance in all propriety. And though it be impossible



possible for us to arrive as this true way of conceiving things perfectly, or directly, yet we shall approach nearer and nearer to it, as our intellectual capacities, benevolence, devotion, and the purity of our happiness, depending thereon, advance: and we seem able, at present, to express the real appearance, in the same way as mathematicians do ultimate ratios, to which quantities ever tend, and never arrive, and in a language which bears a sufficient analogy to other expressions that are admitted. So that now (if we allow the third supposition) we may in some sort venture to maintain that, which at first sight seemed not only contrary to obvious experience, but even impossible, viz that all individuals are actually and always infinitely happy. And thus all difficulties relating to the divine attributes will be taken away; God will be infinitely powerful, knowing, and good, in the most absolute sense, if we consider things as they appear to him. And surely, in all vindications of the divine attributes, this ought to be the light in which we are to consider things. We ought to suppose ourselves in the centre of the system, and to try, as far as we are able, to reduce all apparent retrogradations to real progressions. It is also the greatest satisfaction to the mind thus to approximate to its first conceptions concerning the divine goodness, and to answer that endless question, *Why not less misery, and more happiness?* in a language which is plainly analogous to all other authentic language, though it cannot yet be felt by us on account of our present imperfection, and of the mixture of our good with evil. Farther, it is remarkable, that neither the fourth nor fifth suppositions can pass into the third, and that the fifth will always have a mixture of misery in it, as long as the *principium individuationis* is kept up. And if this be taken away, the suppositions themselves are destroyed, and we entirely lost.

I have

I have been the longer in considering the divine benevolence, on account of its importance both to our duty and happiness. There seems to be abundant foundation for faith, hope, resignation, gratitude, love. We cannot doubt but the judge and father of all the world will conduct himself according to justice, mercy, and goodness. However, I desire to repeat once more, that we do not seem to have sufficient evidence to determine absolutely for any of the three last suppositions. We cannot indeed but wish for the third, both from self-interest and benevolence; and its coincidence with the first and second, in the manner just now explained, appears to be some presumption in favour of it.

#### P R O P. V.

*There is but one Being infinite in Power, Knowledge, and Goodness; i. e. but one God.*

For, if we suppose more than one, it is plain, since the attributes of infinite power, knowledge, and goodness, include all possible perfection, that they must be entirely alike to each other, without the least possible variation. They will therefore entirely coalesce in our idea, *i. e.* be one to us. Since they fill all time and space, and are all independent, omnipotent, omniscient, and infinitely benevolent, their ideas cannot be separated, but will have a numerical, as well as a generical, identity. When we suppose other beings generically the same, and yet numerically different, we do at the same time suppose, that they exist in different portions of time or space; which circumstances cannot have place in respect of the supposed plurality of infinite beings. We conclude, therefore, that there is but one infinite being, or God.

The unity of the godhead is also proved by revelation, considered as supported by evidences which  
have

have no dependence on natural religion. And as this proof of the unity is of great importance even now, so it was of far greater in ancient times, when the world was over-run with polytheism. And it is highly probable to me, that as the first notions of the divine power, knowledge, and goodness, which mankind had, were derived from revelation, so much more were their notions of the unity of the Godhead.

# P R O P. VI.

*God is a Spiritual, or immaterial Being.*

SINCE God is the cause of all things, as appears from the foregoing propositions, he must be the cause of all the motions in the material world. If therefore God be not an immaterial being, then matter may be the cause of all the motions in the material world. But matter is a mere passive thing, of whose very essence it is, to be endued with a *vis inertiae*; for this *vis inertiae* presents itself immediately in all our observations and experiments upon it, and is inseparable from it, even in idea. When we consider any of the active powers of matter, as they are called, such as gravitation, magnetism, electricity, or the attractions and repulsions, which take place in the cohesions and separations of the small particles of natural bodies, and endeavour to resolve these into some higher and simpler principles, the *vis inertiae* is always the common basis upon which we endeavour to erect our solutions. For the active party, which is supposed to generate the gravitation, magnetism, &c. in the passive one, must have a motion, and a *vis inertiae*, whereby it endeavours to persist in that motion, else it could have no power; and, by parity of reason, the passive party must have a *vis inertiae* also, else it could neither make resistance to the active party, nor impress motion on foreign bodies.

bodies. Let us proceed therefore as far as we please in a series of successive solutions, we shall always find a *vis inertiae* inherent in matter, and a motion derived to it from some foreign cause. If this cause be supposed matter always, we shall be carried on to an infinite series of solutions, in each of which the same precise difficulty will recur, without our at all approaching to the removal of it. Whence, according to the mathematical doctrine of ultimate ratios, not even an infinite series, were that possible in this case, could remove it. We must therefore stop somewhere, and suppose the requisite motion to be imparted to the subtle matter, by something, which is not matter; *i. e.* since God is the ultimate author of all motion, we must suppose him to be immaterial.

The same thing may be inferred thus: if there be nothing but matter in the world, then the motions and modifications of matter must be the cause of intelligence. But even finite intelligences, such as that of man, for instance, shew so much skill and design in their constitution, as also to shew, that their causes, *i. e.* the appropriated motions and modifications of matter, must be appointed and conducted by a prior and superior intelligence. The infinite intelligence of God therefore, proved in the third proposition, since it results from the motions and modifications of matter, requires another infinite intelligence to direct these motions, which is absurd. God is therefore proved to be immaterial from his infinite intelligence.

It is true, indeed, that our senses convey nothing to us but impressions from matter; and, therefore, that we can have no express original ideas of any things, besides material ones; whence we are led to conclude, that there is nothing but matter in the universe. However, this is evidently a prejudice drawn from our situation, and an argument taken merely from our  
ignorance,



ignorance, and the narrowness of our faculties. Since therefore, on the other hand, mere matter appears quite unable to account for the simplest and most ordinary phænomena, we must either suppose an immaterial substance, or else suppose, that matter has some powers and properties different and superior to those which appear. But this last supposition is the same in effect as the first, though, on account of the imperfection of language, it seems to be different.

At the same time it ought to be observed, that if a person acknowledges the infinite power, knowledge, and goodness of God, the proofs of which are prior to, and quite independent on, that of his immateriality, this person acknowledges all that is of practical importance. But then, on the other hand, it is also to be observed, that the opinion of the materiality of the divine nature has a tendency to lessen our reverence for it, and, consequently, to invalidate the proofs of the divine power, knowledge, and goodness.

How far the scriptures deliver the immateriality of God in a strict philosophical sense, may perhaps be doubted, as their style is in general popular. However, there is a strong presumption, that they teach this doctrine, since the popular sense and natural interpretation of many sublime passages concerning the divine nature infer its immateriality. There is therefore some evidence for this attribute, to be taken from revelation, considered as standing upon its own distinct proofs.

COROLLARY. Since God is immaterial, matter must be one of the works of his infinite power. In the mean time, this does not seem to me to exclude the possibility of its having existed from all eternity. But then, neither have we, on the other hand, any reason to conclude, that the whole material system, or any part of it, could not have been created in time. It is, perhaps, most probable, *i. e.* suitable to the



divine attributes, that infinite material worlds have existed from all eternity. But it becomes us, in all these things, to distrust our own reasonings and conjectures to the utmost.

## P R O P. VII.

*God is an eternal and omnipresent Being.*

GOD's eternity, *à parte ante*, appears from the second proposition in which his independency is proved; and the eternity, *à parte post*, is inseparably connected with that *à parte ante*. Both are also included in the idea of infinite power, or of infinite knowledge; and, indeed, when we say, that God is eternal *à parte ante*, and *à parte post*, we do, we can, mean no more, than to say, that his power and knowledge extend to all times. For we must not conceive, or affirm, that he exists in succession, as finite beings do; through whose imaginations, or intellects, trains of ideas pass. All time, as was said before, is equally present to him, though in a manner of which we cannot form the least conception.

In like manner, by God's omnipresence, or ubiquity, we must be understood to mean, that his power and knowledge extend to all places. For as time, and its exponent, the succession of ideas, is a thing that relates merely to finite beings; so space and place relate, in their original sense, to material ones only; nor can we perceive any relation that they bear to immaterial ones, unless as far as we feign a resemblance between material and immaterial beings, which is surely an inconsistent fiction. We cannot, therefore, discover any relation which space or place bear to the divine existence. It is a sufficient acknowledgment both of God's eternity and omnipresence, that we believe his power and knowledge to extend to all times and places, though we be entirely at a loss how to conceive or express the manner of  
this

this infinite extent of these attributes. And there is a remarkable agreement between innumerable passages of the scriptures, and this practical notion of God's eternity and omnipresence.

P R O P. VIII.

*God is an immutable Being. :*

THIS follows from the infinity of the divine power, knowledge, and goodness, *i. e.* from his infinite perfection. For if the divine nature admitted of any variation, it would also admit of different kinds and degrees of perfection, and therefore could not always be infinitely perfect. This is the most abstracted and philosophical way of considering the divine immutability. In a popular and practical sense, it excludes all that which we call inconstant, arbitrary, and capricious, in finite beings; and becomes a sure foundation for hope, trust, and resignation. We may consider ourselves as being at all times, and in all places, equally under the direction and protection of the same infinite power, knowledge, and goodness, which are so conspicuous in the frame of the visible world.

P R O P. IX.

*God is a free Being.*

THE authors who have treated upon the divine nature and attributes, usually ascribe liberty or freedom to God, and suppose it to be of a nature analogous to that free-will which they ascribe to man. But it appears to me, that neither the philosophical, nor popular liberty, as they are defined below in the fourteenth and fifteenth propositions, can be at all applied to God. Thus, we can neither apply to God the power of doing different things, the

previous circumstances remaining the same, nor a voluntary generated power of introducing ideas, or performing motions; nor any thing analogous to either of these powers, without the grossest anthropomorphism.

But liberty is also used in another sense, viz. as the negation of, and the freedom from, a superior, compelling force; and in this sense it may and must be applied to the Deity; his independency and infinity including it. And in this sense it is contrary to the notion of those heathens, who supposed even God himself subject to fate.

Upon the whole, if by liberty, freedom, or free-will, be meant any thing great or glorious, God certainly has it; if otherwise certainly not. Thus, if it mean freedom from a superior compelling cause of any kind, as in the last paragraph, God certainly has it, he being the cause of causes, the universal, the one only cause. If it mean, that God could have made an universe less perfect than that which actually exists, he certainly has it not, because this would make God less perfect also. And here it seems to be a thing established amongst writers on this matter, to maintain, that God is subject to a moral necessity, and to the perfection of his own nature; which expressions, however, are to be considered as nothing more than particular ways of asserting the infinity of the divine power, knowledge, and goodness. If it be said, that God might have made a different universe, equally perfect with that which now exists, and that his freedom consists in this, the answer seems to be, that we are entirely lost here, in the infinities of infinities, &c. *ad infinitum*, which always have existed, and always will exist, with respect to kind, degree, and every possible mode of existence. One cannot, in the least, presume either to deny or affirm this kind of freedom of God, since the absolute perfection of God seems to imply both entire uniformity, and

and infinite variety in his works. We can here only submit, and refer all to God's infinite knowledge and perfection.

### P R O P. X.

*Holiness, Justice, Veracity, Mercy, and all other moral Perfections, ought to be ascribed to God in an infinite Degree.*

I HAVE in the last four propositions treated of such attributes of the divine nature, as have a more immediate connection with the natural ones of independency, infinite power, and infinite knowledge. I come now to those, that are deducible from, and explanatory of the moral one, viz. of the divine benevolence.

The chief of these seem to be holiness, justice, veracity, and mercy. These are ascribed to all earthly superiors, to whom we pay respect and love, and therefore must belong, in the popular and practical sense, to him, who is the highest object of reverence and affection. Let us see how each is to be defined, and what relation they bear to benevolence.

First, then, Holiness may be defined by moral purity and rectitude. And these, when applied to the Deity, can only denote the rectitude of his actions towards his creatures. If therefore he be benevolent to all his creatures, he cannot but have moral purity and rectitude.

The same thing may be considered thus: all moral turpitude in us proceeds from our selfish fears or desires, made more irregular and impetuous through our ignorance, and other natural imperfections. But none of these causes can take place with respect to the Deity; he must therefore be free from all moral turpitude.

Justice is that which gives to every one according to his deserts, at least as much as his good deserts



require, and not more than is suitable to his evil ones. But this is evidently included in the divine benevolence, even according to the fifth of the suppositions, mentioned *Prop. 4.* by those who defend that supposition, and, according to the third and fourth, by the common consent of all, and the plain reason of the thing. No man can deserve more from his Creator than a balance of happiness proportional to his merit, which is the fourth supposition; and consequently the divine benevolence, according to the third supposition, in which the balance of happiness is infinite, includes strict justice, and infinitely more. And all this will hold equally, whether we define desert in the popular, practical way, by the three meritorious principles of action, benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, alone; or by these, with the additional supposition of philosophical liberty, if we embrace either the third or fourth suppositions. Philosophical liberty is indeed necessary for the vindication of the divine benevolence and justice, according to the fifth supposition, in the opinion of most of those who hold this supposition. But then they esteem it to be also sufficient for this purpose, and consequently maintain the divine justice, into which we are now inquiring.

It may also be reckoned a part of justice not to let offenders go unpunished, or escape with too slight a degree of punishment; the order and happiness of the world, *i. e.* benevolence, requiring, that frail men should be deterred from vice by the dreadful examples of others, and mischievous persons disarmed. However, this does not at all hinder, but that the same persons, who are thus punished and disarmed, may afterwards receive a balance of happiness, finite or infinite. And thus punitive justice may be reconciled to bounty and benevolence, according to the third or fourth suppositions.

Veracity



Veracity in men is, the observance of truth, and fidelity in all their declarations and promises to others; and the obligation to it arises from its great usefulness in all the intercourses of mankind with each other, and the extreme mischiefs which fiction and fraud occasion in the world. And it cannot be doubted, but that the divine benevolence, according to any of the suppositions above made, includes what is analogous to this moral quality in men.

In like manner, it cannot be doubted but that the divine benevolence includes mercy, or all that tenderness to offenders which the order and happiness of the world will permit. Or, if the fifth supposition made concerning the divine benevolence be found to exclude it, this will be a strong argument for rejecting that supposition.

I have here shewn in what manner we may vindicate these attributes of the divine nature, from the whole of things, *i. e.* the course of events, both as they now appear in the present state, and as we expect they will appear in a future one. But God has also given us sufficient general evidences of these his relative moral attributes, from the present state alone; at the same time that, if we extend our views no farther, some difficulties and perplexities will arise in respect of certain particulars. I will mention some both of the evidences and difficulties in regard to each of these four attributes of holiness, justice, veracity, and mercy.

It might be expected, that God, if he thought fit to institute a religion by revelation, should institute one in which holiness and moral purity should be eminently enjoined, and moral turpitude prohibited in the most awful manner. And it is a remarkable coincidence of things, and evidence of the divine purity, that the Jewish and Christian religions should both have this internal proof, and the most cogent external ones in their favour. Whilst on the contrary,

the impure Pagan religions had all the external marks of fiction and forgery.

The voice of conscience, or the moral sense, within a man, however implanted or generated, enjoining moral rectitude, and forbidding moral turpitude, and accordingly acquitting or condemning, rewarding or punishing, bears witness, in like manner, to the moral rectitude of that universal cause from whom it must proceed ultimately.

At the same time there are difficulties in revealed religion, and deviations in the moral sense, much contrary to what we seem to expect from our first notions of the divine rectitude.

Since God is just, we may expect that virtue will be the source of happiness, vice that of misery, even in this world. And so we find it in general; at the same time that there are many particular exceptions of both kinds.

The veracity of God seems to engage him to take care, that all those intimations which may be reckoned calls and cautions of nature, should give us right information; also that all persons who have the apparent credentials of being sent from him, *i. e.* those of performing miracles, should be in truth so sent. And all things concur, in general, to verify both these positions. There are, however, several particular exceptions, as is well known.

Mercy requires, that such persons as repent and amend should have opportunities of fresh trial, and of retrieving, afforded them. And this is remarkably so in the general. Most men are tried again and again before their healths, fortunes, credit, &c. become irrecoverable. And yet there are some instances of extraordinary severity upon the very first offence.

Now it may be observed of all these instances, that the general tenor is sufficient to establish the attributes here asserted; it being reasonable to expect, from our ignorance of the present state, and much  
more

more from that of the future one, that great difficulties and exceptions must occur to us. And as these unsearchable judgments of God serve to humble us, and make us sensible of our ignorance, they even concur with the general tenor.

P R O P. XI.

*God is to be considered by us, not only as our Creator, but also as our Governor, Judge, and Father.*

THAT God is our Creator, is evident from the three first propositions; in which his independency and infinite power are established, from the necessity which we finite and dependent beings have of an infinite and independent Creator: and this appellation belongs to him alone.

The three following appellations are first applied to earthly superiors; and therefore belong to God only in an analogical sense. It is, however, a sense of infinite importance to be acknowledged and regarded by us: let us therefore, see in what manner analogies drawn from language, and from the phænomena of nature, lead us to call God our governor, judge, and father.

As God is our creator, he has, according to the analogy of language, a right to dispose of us, to govern and judge us, and is also, our father in a much higher sense than our natural parents, who are only occasional causes, as it were, of our existence. In like manner, his infinite power and knowledge entitle him to be our governor, and his infinite benevolence to be our father: the intimations also which he gives of his will, both in his word and works, and the rewards and punishments which he bestows in the way of natural consequences, as we term it, all shew, that he is our governor and judge. And  
as

as the moral attributes asserted in the last proposition may be deduced from these appellations of governor, judge, and father, established on independent principles, so they, when proved by their own peculiar evidences, infer these appellations: all which may be summed up in this general position, that the events of life, and the use of language, beget such trains of ideas and associations in us, as that we cannot but ascribe all morally good qualities, and all venerable and amiable appellations, to the Deity; at the same time that we perceive the meaning of our expressions not to be strictly the same, as when they are applied to men; but an analogical meaning, however a higher, more pure, and more perfect one. The justness of this application is farther confirmed by the common consent of all ages and nations, and by the whole tenor of the scriptures.

If it be said, that since this method of speaking is not strictly literal and true, but merely popular and anthropomorphitical, it ought to be rejected; I answer, that even the attributes of independency, omnipotence, omniscience, and infinite benevolence; though the most pure, exalted, and philosophical appellations, to which we can attain, fall infinitely short of the truth, of representing the Deity as he is, but are mere popular and anthropomorphitical expressions. And the same might still be said for ever of higher and more pure expressions, could we arrive at them: they would ever be infinitely deficient, and unworthy of God. But then it appears from the preceding propositions, and other writings of a like nature, that, if we will consider the phenomena of the world, and argue from them sufficiently, we must needs see and acknowledge, that there is an infinite being, and that power, knowledge, and goodness, are his character: We cannot get rid of this internal feeling and conviction, but by refusing to consider the subject, and to pursue the train of reasoning,  
which



which our own faculties, or the preceding inquiries of others, will lead us to. God is not to be esteemed an unreal being, or destitute of all character, because he is infinite and incomprehensible, or because we have not adequate phrases whereby to denote his existence and attributes. On the contrary, his infinite nature seems strongly to argue, that existence, power, knowledge, and goodness, do really and properly belong to him alone; and that what we call so here on earth, in our first and literal senses, are mere shadows and figures of the true realities. And it would be in vain to bid us reject this language, since it must recur again and again from the frame of our natures, if we pursue the subject. In like manner, the relative moral attributes of holiness, justice, veracity, mercy, &c. and the relative moral appellations of governor, judge, and father, &c. are inseparably connected with the use of language, and the course and constitution of the visible world. We see that things have happened, and must believe, that they will hereafter happen (*i. e.* in the general, and allowing for particular exceptions, as above remarked), after such a manner as these attributes and appellations intimate to us: they are, consequently, a convenient and highly useful method of ranging and explaining past events, and predicting future ones, and therefore may be used for this purpose; nay, they must be so used, since the events of life thus ranged, explained, and predicted by them, do necessarily suggest them to us, and impress upon us this their use, admitting only the real existence of God, and his infinite power, knowledge, and goodness; which, as was just now shewn, cannot but be admitted, if men will think sufficiently on the subject. However, since the use of these relative moral attributes and appellations is popular, and attended with particular exceptions; whereas that of the attributes of infinite power, knowledge, and goodness, is more philosophical



philosophical and extensive, it will be proper to bear this in mind; and where there appears to be any opposition between the popular and philosophical language, to interpret that in subordination to this.

COROLLARY. The doctrine of Providence, general and particular, may be considered as a consequence from the foregoing attributes and appellations of the divine nature. By general providence, I mean the adjusting all events to the greatest good of the whole; by particular, the adjusting all to the greatest good of each individual; and, consequently, by both together, the adjusting the greatest good of the whole, and of each individual, to each other; so that both shall fall exactly upon the same point. However difficult this may seem, I take it to be the genuine consequence of the foregoing propositions. Infinite power, knowledge, and goodness, must make our most kind and merciful Father both able and willing to effect this: it does, therefore, actually take place, though we cannot see it. However, that there are many marks both of general and particular providence, as thus explained, is sufficiently evident and acknowledged by all: both these appear also to be asserted in the scriptures.

The following observation affords a strong evidence for a particular providence. When a person surveys the events of his past life, he may find many, which have happened much contrary to natural expectation, and his then desires, which yet appear extremely beneficial and desirable at the now present time, as also to have proceeded from natural causes then unknown to him. Now, we may conclude from hence, that God conceals the tendencies and results of the course of nature at the then present time, lest we should trust in that, and forsake him; but discovers them afterwards with their harmonies and uses, that we may see his goodness, knowledge, and power, in them, and so trust *him* in  
future

future perplexities. It is analogous to this that the scripture prophecies are inexplicable before the event, and often sufficiently clear afterwards.

## P R O P. XII.

*The Manner of Reasoning here used, in respect of the Course and Constitution of Nature, has a Tendency to beget in us Love and Reverence towards God, and Obedience to his Will: or, in other Words, there is a Religion of Nature properly so called.*

NATURAL religion appears to be used in different senses by different writers: however, they are all, I think, reducible to the three that follow, and will all be found to coincide ultimately, though they may appear different at first view.

The First Sense, in which natural religion may be used, is that of this proposition; in which it is put for that love and reverence towards God, and obedience to his will, which the light of nature, or the consideration of the works of God, enjoins. In this sense it is most properly opposed to, and contradistinguished from, revealed religion, or those affections and actions towards God, which the scripture, or the word of God, enjoins.

Secondly, Natural religion may be defined such a regulation of the affections and actions as the moral sense requires: for the moral sense is part of the light of nature, and of our natural faculties, whether it be considered as an instinct, or as the generated result of external impressions and our natural frame taken together, according to what is delivered in the first part of these observations; and this moral sense approves and commands, or disapproves and forbids, certain dispositions of mind, and bodily actions flowing therefrom. It is also called the law of first inscription

inscription by many persons, and under that term distinguished from the law of revelation, which is supposed posterior to it in order of time. Hence the same persons consider the moral sense, or law of first inscription, as the foundation of natural religion: and, indeed, most persons either expressly adopt, or implicitly refer to, this definition of natural religion in their writings and discourses. The heathen world, not having the immediate light of revelation, are supposed to have had nothing more than the mere light of nature, and mere natural religion; and they seem to have been chiefly directed by the sense of what was fit, right, and proper, upon the occasion, *i. e.* by the moral sense. Natural religion may therefore, according to this way of considering it, be properly defined by the moral sense.

Thirdly, Natural religion may be defined by rational self-interest, *i. e.* it may be called such a regulation of our affections and actions, as will procure for us our *summum bonum*, or greatest possible happiness. If we suppose the inquiries of the ancients concerning the *summum bonum* to have been of a religious and moral nature, then will this definition be suitable to their notions. However, it has a very important use, *viz.* that of compelling us to be attentive, impartial, and earnest in the inquiry.

I will now proceed, first, to prove the proposition, or to deduce love and reverence to God, and obedience to his will, from the preceding method of reasoning concerning the course and constitution of nature; and, secondly, to shew the perfect agreement of all these three definitions of natural religion with each other.

Now it is at once evident, that the consideration of the infinite power, knowledge, and goodness of God, of his holiness, justice, veracity, and mercy, and of his being our creator, governor, judge, and father, must inspire us with the highest love and reverence

reverence for him, and beget in us that tendency to comply with his will, which according to the proper use of language, is called a sense of *duty*, *obligation*, of what we *ought* to do. It is evident also, that the will of God must be determined by his attributes and appellations. He must therefore will, that we should apply to him, as we do to earthly superiors of the same character, purifying, however, and exalting our affections to the utmost; that we should be merciful, holy, just, &c. in imitation of him, and because this is to concur with him in his great design of making all his creatures happy; and lastly, that we should so use the pleasures of sense, and the enjoyments of this world, as not to hurt ourselves or others. There is therefore a course of action regarding God, our neighbour, and ourselves, plainly enjoined by the light of nature; or, in the words of the proposition, there is a religion of nature properly so called.

I come, in the next place, to shew the agreement of the second and third definitions of natural religion with the first, or with that of the proposition.

Now, that compliance with the moral sense coincides with obedience to the will of God, needs no proof, it being the first and immediate dictate of the moral sense, that it is fit, right, and our necessary duty, to obey God, as soon as he is discovered with the amiable and awful attributes and appellations above ascribed to him. There is, therefore, an entire agreement between the first and second definitions. It may appear also, that the first rule of duty is necessary to perfect the second. For the moral sense, as will appear from the preceding history of its rise and growth, must be vague and uncertain, and vary according to the various circumstances of life. But the moral character of God, as delivered in the foregoing propositions, affords a plain rule of life,  
applicable



applicable and precise in the various circumstances of it. When, therefore, obedience to the will of God is established by the moral sense, it does, in return, become a regulator to this, determine its uncertainties, and reconcile its inconsistencies. And, agreeably to this, we may observe, that the perfection of the moral sense is, in general, proportional to the perfection of our notions of the divine nature; and that the idolatry of the heathens, and their ignorance of the true God, must have produced an utter perversion and corruption of their moral sense, agreeably to the declarations of the scriptures; which is a remarkable coincidence of reason with revelation.

In like manner, it needs no proof, that rational self-interest, and obedience to the will of God, are the same thing. Our only hope and security, here and hereafter, must be in our obedience to him, who has all power and all knowledge. And thus the first and third definitions are found to be perfectly coincident. The second and third, therefore, *i. e.* the whole three, are coincident also.

This coincidence might be confirmed by numberless instances, were we to consider and compare together the dictates of the moral character of God, of our own moral sense, properly directed, and of rational self-interest in the several particular circumstances of life. But this would be to anticipate what I have to say in the third chapter of this second part concerning the rule of life.

### P R O P. XIII.

*Natural Religion receives great Light and Confirmation from Revealed.*

It seems to be the opinion of some persons, that revealed religion is entirely founded upon natural; so that unless natural religion be first established upon its own proper evidences, we cannot proceed

at



at all to the proof of revealed. If this were so, revealed religion could not cast any light or evidence upon natural, but what it had before received from it; and consequently, this proposition would be built upon that false way of reasoning which is called arguing in a circle. But there are certainly independent evidences for revealed religion, as well as for natural; they both receive light and confirmation from each other; and this mutual confirmation is a still farther evidence for both. I will give a short account of all these particulars, that the proposition may the more fully appear.

First, Natural religion has independent evidences. This has been the business of the foregoing propositions, and particularly of the last, to shew. And indeed, it is acknowledged by all, unless they be atheists or sceptics. We are certainly able to infer the existence and attributes of God, with our relation and duty to him, from the mere consideration of natural phænomena, in the same manner as we do any conclusions in natural philosophy. And though our evidence here may not perhaps be demonstrative, it is certainly probable in the highest degree.

Secondly, Revealed religion has also independent evidences. For, if we allow the miracles mentioned in the Old and New Testaments, the genuineness and accomplishment of the prophecies contained therein, and the moral characters of Christ, the prophets and apostles, it will be impossible not to pay the greatest regard to the doctrines and precepts which they deliver, *i. e.* to revealed religion. We do, and we must always give credit to persons much superior to ourselves in natural and moral endowments. These endowments strike us with awe and reverence, engage our attention, humble us, and put us into a teachable, flexible disposition. And I appeal to all those, who do really believe the miracles and moral characters of Christ, the prophets and apostles, and

the accomplishment of the prophecies delivered by them, whether they do not immediately find themselves in this humble, teachable disposition of mind, upon considering these credentials of a divine mission, and that exclusively of all other considerations. As to those who do not suppose Christ, the prophets and apostles, to have had these credentials, they can scarce be proper judges, what would be the genuine consequence of a state of mind, of a belief, which they have not. However, one may appeal even to them, provided they will only suppose these credentials true for a moment, in order to see what would then follow. And it is a strong argument of the justness of this reasoning, that all those who reject revealed religion, do also reject the credentials, *i. e.* the truth of the scripture history. Revealed religion is therefore built upon the truth of the scripture history, *i. e.* upon the external evidences commonly called historical and prophetical. But these evidences are to be tried in the same manner as the evidences for any other history, and have no more connection with natural religion, and its evidences, such, for instance, as those delivered in this chapter, than the evidences for the *Greek* or *Roman* history. So that revealed religion has evidences, and those of the strongest kind, entirely independent on natural religion.

Thirdly, Natural religion receives much light and confirmation from revealed, agreeably to the proposition here to be proved. This follows both because revealed religion, now shewn to have its independent evidences, teaches the same doctrines concerning God, as I have remarked already in several places, and delivers the same precepts to man, in the general as natural; and because these very independent evidences, viz. the miracles and moral characters of Christ, the prophets and apostles, and the accomplishment of their prophecies, have a direct  
and

and immediate tendency to beget in us a deep sense and conviction of a superior power, and of his providence and moral government over the world. So that if a man should either be ignorant of the chain of reasoning by which the existence and attributes of God and natural religion are proved from the phænomena of the world, or should, from some depravation of mind, intellectual or moral, be disposed to call in question this chain of reasoning, in whole or in part; he must however come to the same conclusions, from the mere force of the historical and prophetic evidences in favour of the scriptures. And this is a thing of the utmost importance to mankind, there being many who are incapable of pursuing this chain of reasoning, many who, though capable, are disinclined to it, many who from their vices have a contrary inclination, and some who seeing the perplexity and obscurity that attend some subordinate parts of this reasoning, are disposed to doubt about the whole. For though something of the same kind holds in respect of the historical and prophetic evidences for the truth of the scriptures, especially of the last, yet, in general, these are more level to the capacities of the inferior ranks amongst mankind, and more simple and striking, than the independent evidences for natural religion; and if they were but equally convincing, they would, however, make the evidence double upon the whole. Not to mention, that it is an inexpressible satisfaction to the best men, and the ablest philosophers, those who have the most entire conviction from natural reason, to have this new and distinct support for such important truths. It may be added as an argument in favour of the reasoning of this paragraph, *i. e.* of the proposition here to be proved, to those who believe revealed religion, that God has thought fit to teach mankind natural religion chiefly by means of revealed.

Fourthly, Revealed religion receives great light and confirmation from natural. For if we suppose a person to be first instructed in the doctrines and precepts of natural religion, and to be entirely convinced of their truth and fitness from the mere light of reason, and then to have the scriptures communicated to him, the conformity of these with his previous notions would be a strong evidence in their favour, *i. e.* in favour of the miracles, prophecies, and those doctrines which are peculiar to revealed religion. When, farther, he came to perceive, that many of the writers of the sacred books lived when the truths of natural religion were unknown to the rest of the world, and that many also were of so low a rank in life, that they cannot be supposed to have known even so much as the rest of the world did, by natural means, he will be strongly inclined to allow them that supernatural light which they claim, *i. e.* to allow their divine authority.

Lastly, The mutual light and confirmation which natural and revealed religion cast upon each other, and the analogy which there is between their proper evidences, and even that between the several obscurities and perplexities that attend each, are a new argument in favour of both, considered as united together, and making one rule of life, and the charter of a happy immortality. For resemblance, agreement, and harmony of the parts, are the peculiar characteristics of truth, as inconsistency and self-contradiction are of fiction and falsehood.



## P R O P. XIV.

*Religion presupposes Free-will in the popular and practical Sense, i. e. it presupposes a voluntary Power over our Affections and Actions.*

FOR religion being the regulation of our affections and actions according to the will of God, it presupposes, that after this will is made known to us, and we, in consequence thereof, become desirous of complying with it, a sufficient power of complying with it should be put into our hands. Thus, for instance, since religion commands us to love God and our neighbour, it presupposes that we have the power of generating these affections in ourselves, by introducing the proper generating causes, and making the proper associations, *i. e.* by meditation, religious conversation, reading practical books of religion, and prayer. Since religion requires of us to perform beneficent actions, and to abstain from injurious ones, also to abstain from all those self-indulgences, which would be hurtful to ourselves, it presupposes, either that we have a power of so doing, or at least a power of generating such dispositions of mind, as will enable us so to do. Farther, it presupposes that we have a power of making perpetual improvement in virtuous affections and actions, since this also is required of us by it. Still farther, since religion requires of a man\* this regulation of his affections and actions, and since the powers hitherto mentioned are all grounded upon a sufficient desire thus to regulate himself, it must presuppose a power of generating this sufficient desire, and so on till we come to something which the man is already possessed of, as part of his mental frame, either conferred in a supernatural way, or acquired in the usual course of nature. For religion, in requiring the powers above-mentioned, requires also whatever pre-



vious powers are necessary to the actual exertion of these powers. But all these powers, of whatever order they are, the last excepted, are those powers over our affections and actions, which I have, in the foregoing part of this work, endeavoured to derive from association, and shewn to be the same with those which are commonly called voluntary powers. It follows, therefore, that religion requires voluntary powers over our affections and actions, or free-will in the popular and practical sense.

This may be illustrated by the consideration of the state of madmen, idiots, children, and brutes, in respect of religion. For as they are all esteemed to be incapable of religion, and exempted from the obligation thereof, so the reason of this in all is evidently, that they are destitute of the proper voluntary powers over their affections and actions; the associations requisite thereto having never been formed in idiots, children, and brutes, and being confounded and destroyed in madmen. For suppose the child to be grown up, and the madman to recover his senses, *i. e.* suppose the associations requisite for the voluntary powers to be generated or restored, and religion will claim them as its proper subjects.

In like manner, it may be observed, that when any action is commended or blamed, this is always done upon supposition, that the action under consideration was the effect of voluntary powers. Thus, when a man commits an action otherwise blameable, through inattention, ignorance, or disease, he is excused on account of its being involuntary; unless the inattention, ignorance, or disease, were themselves voluntary, and then the blame remains. But commendation and blame are ideas that belong to religion: it appears therefore, that voluntary powers must belong to it also.

I asserted above, that religion not only requires and presupposes the common voluntary powers, by which

which we perform and forbear actions, and new-model our affections, but also whatever else, voluntary or involuntary, is necessary for the actual exertion of these powers. And the connection between these points seems to be immediate and undeniable; to require any thing, must be to require all that is necessary for that thing. And yet, since all men do not act up to the precepts of religion, it seems undeniable, on the other hand, that some want something that is necessary, immediately or mediately, for the actual exertion of the proper voluntary powers over their affections and actions. Now, I see no way of extricating ourselves from this difficulty, but by supposing, that those who want this one necessary thing at present, will, however, obtain it hereafter, and that they who shall obtain it at any distant future time, may be said to have obtained it already, in the eye of him to whom past, present, and future, are all present, *who quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that be not as though they were.* For that the supposition of free-will, in the philosophical sense, cannot solve this difficulty, will appear, I think, in the next proposition.

COROLLARY. It may be reckoned some confirmation of religion, that the voluntary powers which it requires, according to this proposition, are an evident fact, and also that they are deducible from the frame of our natures, *i. e.* from our original faculties, and the law of association, taken together. For thus religion may be said to harmonize with observation, and with the nature of man, its subject.

## P R O P. XV.

*Religion does not presuppose Free-will in the philosophical Sense, i. e. it does not presuppose a Power of doing different Things, the previous Circumstances remaining the same.*

FOR, First, It has been shewn, in the foregoing part of this work, that we do not, in fact, ever exert any such power in the important actions of our lives, or the strong workings of our affections, all these being evidently determinable by the previous circumstances. There are therefore no actions or affections left, except trifling and evanescent ones, in which religion can presuppose philosophical free-will, or liberty; and even here the evidence for it is merely an *argumentum ab ignorantia*. But if religion requires philosophical liberty at all, it must require it chiefly in the most important actions and affections. It does not therefore require it at all. We cannot suppose religion to be at variance with common observation, and the frame of our natures.

Secondly, Some reasons have been given already, in the first part of this work, and more will be added in the next proposition, to shew that philosophical liberty cannot take place in man, but is an impossibility. It is therefore impossible, that religion should require it.

Thirdly, It appears from the course of reasoning used under the foregoing proposition, that all which religion does require and presuppose, is, first, a sufficient desire, hope, fear, self-interest, or other such like motive, and then sufficient voluntary powers, whereby to regulate our affections and actions agreeably to the will of God. But philosophical liberty, or the power of doing different things, the previous circumstances remaining the same, is so far from  
being

being required, in order to our obtaining any of these requisites, that it is inconsistent with them. For the sufficient desire, &c. unless it be given by God in a supernatural way, is of a factitious nature, and follows the previous circumstances with a rigorous exactness; in like manner the voluntary powers are all generated according to the law of association, which law operates in a mechanical necessary way, and admits of no variations, while the circumstances remain the same; all which is, I presume, sufficiently evident to those who have well considered the foregoing part of this work. These requisites are therefore inconsistent with philosophical liberty, inasmuch as this implies, that though there be a desire sufficient to cause the exertion of the will, this exertion may or may not follow; also, that though the voluntary powers depending on this exertion be completely generated by association, they may or may not follow it in fact. This supposition is indeed absurd at first sight; however, if it be admitted for a moment, in order to see what would follow, it is manifest, that the man will be rendered less able to comply with the will of God thereby, and that it will not add to, but take away from, the requisites proposed by religion. Philosophical liberty does not therefore help us to solve the difficulty mentioned under the last proposition, but, on the contrary, increases it.

If it should be said, that we are not to suppose the desire sufficient, and the voluntary powers complete, and then farther to suppose, that these may or may not take effect, but only to suppose desire in general, sufficient or insufficient, and voluntary powers in general, complete or incomplete, and that thus it will not be unreasonable to suppose, that they may or may not take effect; whence the manifest absurdity mentioned in the last paragraph will be removed; I answer, that this is to desert the hypothesis of philosophical liberty, the previous circumstances being supposed



supposed different, that so their consequences may be different also. If any particular degree of desire or voluntary power be fixed upon, and all the other concurring circumstances of body and mind fixed likewise, *i. e.* if the previous circumstances be rigorously determinate, which is the supposition of philosophical liberty, this one fixed, determinate degree of desire, or voluntary power, cannot have the two opposite epithets of sufficient and insufficient, or of complete and incomplete, both predicated of it with truth, define sufficiency or completeness as you please. Philosophical liberty does not therefore allow us to suppose desire or voluntary power in general, in order that they either may or may not take effect.

Fourthly, It will appear that religion does not presuppose philosophical liberty, if we enter upon the examination of those arguments which are commonly brought to shew that it does. These are, that unless philosophical liberty be admitted, there will be no foundation for commendation or blame, and consequently no difference between virtue and vice; that all punishment for actions, usually called vicious, will be unjust; and that God will be the author of such actions, which it is impious to suppose; inasmuch as the notion of popular liberty is not sufficient to obviate these difficulties. Now, to this I answer, that there are two different methods of speaking, and, as it were, two different languages, used upon these subjects; the one popular, and, when applied to God, anthropomorphitcal; the other philosophical; and that the notion of popular liberty is sufficient to obviate these difficulties, while we keep to the popular language alone; also, that the philosophical language does of itself obviate these difficulties, while we keep to it alone; but that, if we mix these languages, then, and not till then, insuperable difficulties will arise, as might well be expected. Let us consider each of these positions particularly.

First

First then, I say that the supposition of popular liberty is sufficient to obviate the forementioned difficulties, whilst we keep to the popular language alone. For, in the popular language, a man is commended and blamed merely for the right or wrong use of his voluntary powers; the first is called virtue, the last vice; and rewards and punishments are said to be respectively due to them. Thus, when a man, having an opportunity to do a beneficent action, exerts an act of will, and, in consequence thereof does it, he is commended for it; it is called a virtue, or a right use of his voluntary powers, and is said to deserve a reward; whereas, had he, in like circumstances, done a malevolent action, he would have been blamed for it; it would have been called a wrong use of his voluntary powers, or a vice; and a punishment inflicted upon him, in consequence hereof, would have been said to be just. This is a mere history of the fact, and a narration of the method in which the words here considered acquire their proper senses; and I appeal to the general tenor of writings and discourses for the support of what is here asserted. If no voluntary action be exerted, the words commendation, right use, virtue, reward, on one hand, also the words, blame, wrong use, vice, punishment, on the other, become entirely unapplicable. If there be, and the motive be good, suppose piety or benevolence, the first set of words take place; if the motive be bad, the last. Men, in the common use of language, never consider whether the agent had it in his power to have done otherwise, the previous circumstances remaining the same; they only require, that he should have done a beneficent action, from a benevolent intention. If they find this, they will apply the words, commendation, right use, &c. And the same holds in respect of injurious actions, and malevolent intentions. The agent will, in this case, be blamed, and said to be justly punished, without any farther inquiry. Sometimes

times, indeed, they do inquire farther, viz. into the original of these intentions. But then this comes to the same thing at last; for if these intentions were generated voluntarily, it enhances the commendation or blame due to them; if, in great measure, involuntarily, abates it. Popular liberty, or voluntary powers, do therefore afford sufficient foundation for commendation and blame, for the difference between virtue and vice, and for the justice of punishing vice according to the popular language. Where it is to be remarked, that whatever will justify punishments inflicted by men, will justify those inflicted by God in like circumstances, since justice is ascribed to God only in a popular and anthropomorphitcal sense.

And as popular liberty suffices for the forementioned purposes, whilst we use the popular language, so it vindicates God from the charge of being the author of sin, according to the same language. For, according to this, all voluntary actions are ascribed to men, not to God; but sin, or vice, always presupposes an exertion of a voluntary power, according to the popular language; therefore sin must be ascribed to man, and not to God, as long as we continue to speak the popular language.

Secondly, I say, that if we keep to the philosophical language alone, it will obviate all difficulties, and enable us to talk consistently and clearly upon these subjects. For, according to this, virtue and vice are to actions, what secondary qualities are to natural bodies; *i. e.* only ways of expressing the relation which they bear to happiness and misery, just as the secondary qualities of bodies are only modifications of the primary ones. And the same may be said of all the other words belonging to the moral sense. Hence it follows, that, according to the philosophical language, we are to consider all the moral appellations of actions as only denoting their relation to natural good and evil, and that moral good and evil are only compositions and decompositions  
of

of natural. There is, however, a difference between moral good and moral evil, because they are different and opposite compositions; they may also be attended with different and opposite compositions, from the frame of our natures, and circumstances of our lives, such as commendation and blame.

And as justice in God is, by the same language, exalted into benevolence, he may inflict punishment, *i. e.* another species of natural evil, justly, provided it be consistent with benevolence, *i. e.* with a balance of happiness. Man may also inflict punishment justly, provided he does it according to some definition of justice amongst men, previously settled and allowed, suppose compliance with the will of God, the laws of society, the greater good of the whole, &c.

Farther, since all the actions of man proceed ultimately from God, the one universal cause, we must, according to this language, annihilate self, and ascribe all to God. But then, since vice, sin, &c. are only modifications and compositions of natural evil, according to the same language, this will only be to ascribe natural evil to him; and, if the balance of natural good be infinite, then even this natural evil will be absorbed and annihilated by it.

It may a little illustrate what is here delivered, to remark, that as we should not say of a superior being, whose sight could penetrate to the ultimate constitution of bodies, that he distinguished colours, but rather, that he distinguished those modifications of matter which produce the appearances of colours in us, so we ought not to ascribe our secondary ideas of virtue and vice to superior intelligences, and much less to the supreme.

Thirdly, I say, that if we mix these two languages, many difficulties and absurdities must ensue from this previous absurdity. Thus, if, retaining the popular notions of moral good and evil, we suppose God,  
according



according to the philosophical language, to be benevolent only, *i. e.* to regard only natural good and evil, or to be the author of all actions, the consequence will be impious. If we adhere to the philosophical notions of virtue and vice, we must not retain the popular notion of God's justice, inasmuch as punishment will then be unjust; as it will also be, if we join the popular notion of God's justice with the philosophical one, of his being the author of all actions. Lastly, if we allow man to consider himself as the author of his own actions, he must also consider virtue and vice according to the popular notions, and conceive of God as endued with the popular attribute of justice, in order to be incited to virtue, and deterred from vice; whereas, could man really annihilate himself, and refer all to God, perfect love would cast out fear, he would immediately become partaker of the divine nature, and, being one with God, would see him to be pure benevolence and love, and all that he has made to be good.

The following remark may perhaps contribute to illustrate this matter. Virtue and vice, merit and demerit, reward and punishment, are applied to voluntary actions only, as before-mentioned. Hence they are esteemed unapplicable to involuntary ones. But involuntary actions are necessary by a necessity *ab extra*, which is generally seen; and because the necessity *ab intra*, which causes voluntary actions, is seldom seen, these are supposed not to be necessary. Hence not necessary, and necessary, are put for voluntary and involuntary, respectively; and moral appellations supposed peculiar to the first, *i. e.* not necessary; inconsistent with the last, *i. e.* necessary. Hence, when we come to discover our mistake, and to find, that voluntary actions are necessary, an inconsistency arises; we apply moral appellations to them as voluntary from a primary association, deny these appellations of them on account of their new denomination  
of

of necessary, and a secondary and tralatitious association. Here then, if we can either persist in our mistake, and still suppose voluntary actions not to be necessary; or, finding this mistake, can however persist to apply moral appellations to such necessary actions as are voluntary, from the primary association; or, lastly, not being able to withstand the force of the secondary association, whereby moral appellations are denied of necessary actions, voluntary as well as involuntary, can perceive that moral good and evil are only compositions of natural, *i. e.* if we can either see the whole truth, or shut our eyes against that part that offends us; no difficulty will arise.

Philosophical liberty is also supposed by some necessary, in order to solve the origin of evil, and to justify the eternity of punishment; and the obviating of these difficulties is brought as an argument in support of it. Now here I observe,

First, That the origin of evil may be made consistent with the benevolence of God, by supposing that every creature has a balance of happiness; and, consequently, since this is a supposition highly probable, there seems to be little need of philosophical liberty for this purpose.

Secondly, That, since this supposition is highly probable, the eternity of punishment is highly improbable; and, consequently, that philosophical liberty may be needless here also.

Thirdly, That philosophical liberty will not solve the origin of evil. The method of reasoning used here is some such as this. If man have not philosophical liberty, but always does the same thing, where the previous circumstances are the same, then all his actions are to be referred to God; consequently, if he have philosophical liberty, all his actions need not be referred to God; he is an independent creature in some things, and is himself alone chargeable with some of his actions. Let man act wrong in these independent

dependent cases, and the evil which follows will be chargeable upon man, and not God, *i. e.* the origin of evil will be accounted for. But here it is to be observed, that there are some evils, or sufferings, which cannot be supposed to arise from the abuse of free-will in the creature that suffers, as in the pains which happen to children just born, and to brutes. These evils are not therefore chargeable upon *them*. If, therefore, they be chargeable upon free-will, it must be the free-will of some other creature. But this is as great a difficulty, as that which it is brought to solve; and cannot be solved but by supposing that God gives a balance of happiness to *A*, for what he suffers from *B*. Now this supposition, in its full extent, will solve the first difficulty, and make the hypothesis of free-will entirely unnecessary, as observed above. But, besides this, it is to be considered, that since free-will is thus the occasion of introducing evil into the world, the restless, selfish, objecting creature will ask why he has free-will, since it is not this, but happiness, which *he* desires, and hoped from the divine benevolence, the attribute now to be vindicated. He that produces any cause, does, in effect, produce the thing caused. To give a being a power of making itself miserable, if this being use that power, is just the same thing, in him who has infinite power and knowledge, as directly making him miserable; and appears to be no otherwise consistent with benevolence to that being, than upon supposition, that superior happiness is conferred upon him afterwards. Now this removes the difficulty in the case of necessity, as well as of free-will, in the eye of reason, of an infinite being; and clashes less and less without limits with the imagination, as we advance in intellect, disinterestedness, and absolute resignation to God.

If it be said, that God could not but bestow free-will upon his creatures, I answer, that this is *gratis dictum*,

*dictum*, there not being the least appearance of evidence for it; also, that it is making God subject to a necessity superior to himself, which would be to raise a greater difficulty than it solves; and, upon the whole, we may conclude, that the supposition of free-will, or liberty, in the philosophical sense, does not at all help us to account for the origin of evil.

Fourthly, Since free-will cannot account for finite evil, much less can it account for infinite, *i. e.* for the eternity of punishment. And indeed many, who receive free-will, do, however, see its insufficiency for this purpose, and, in consequence thereof, believe that the punishments of a future state will not be eternal. It is true, indeed, that the arguments against the eternity of punishment are shorter, stronger, and clearer, upon the supposition of necessity, of God's being the real, ultimate author of all actions, than upon the supposition of free-will. But then this seems, if all things be duly considered, to be rather a presumption in favour of the doctrine of necessity, than otherwise.

The invention and application of the hypothesis of free-will, for the vindication of the divine benevolence, has probably arisen from the application of what passes in human affairs, in too strict a manner, to the relation between the Creator and his creatures, *i. e.* to an anthropomorphism of too gross a kind. Thus the actions of a son are free, in respect of his father, *i. e.* though the father can, and does influence the son in many things, yet the son's actions depend upon many circumstances, impressions, associations, &c. in which the father has no concern. It will therefore be a sufficient vindication of the father's benevolence to the son, if he has taken care, that the son suffers nothing from the things over which the father has power. What evils happen to the son, from quarters where the son is free in re-



spect of his father, *i. e.* uninfluenced by him, these are no ways to be referred to the father. Now, it is very natural for humble and pious men, in considering the sins and miseries of mankind, to suppose that we have some such powers independent of God; and that all the evil, which happens to each person, is to be derived from these independent powers. But then this notion should not be hastily and blindly embraced and maintained, without an examination of the fact, and of the consistency of such a notion with piety, in other respects. The first of these points I have already considered in the foregoing part of this work; the last I shall now consider in the following proposition.

#### P R O P. XVI.

*The natural Attributes of God, or his infinite Power and Knowledge, exclude the Possibility of Free-will in the philosophical Sense.*

FOR, to suppose that man has a power independent of God, is to suppose, that God's power does not extend to all things, *i. e.* is not infinite. If it be said, that the power itself depends upon God, but the exertion of it upon man, the same difficulty will recur; since the exertion does not depend upon God, there will be something produced in the world, which is not the effect of his power, *i. e.* his power will not extend to all things, consequently not be infinite. And the same thing holds, if we refine farther, and proceed to the exertion of the exertion, &c. If this depend upon man, God's power will be limited by man's; if upon God, we return to the hypothesis of necessity, and of God's being the author of all things. However, the simplest and clearest way is to suppose, that power, and the exertion of power,  
are

are one and the same thing; for power is never known but by its actual exertion, *i. e.* is no power till it be exerted. If, indeed, we say that man's actions depend both upon God and himself, this seems at first sight to solve the difficulty. Since they depend upon God, his power may be infinite; since they depend on man, they may be ascribed to *him*. But then the thing in man on which they depend, call it what you please, must either depend upon God or not; if it does, necessity returns; if not, God's infinite power is infringed. And the same thing will hold, as it appears to me, in any other way of stating this matter.

Again, to suppose that a man may do either the action *A*, or its opposite *a*, the previous circumstances remaining the same, is to suppose that one of them may arise without a cause; for the same previous circumstances cannot be the cause of the two opposite effects. Now, if any thing can arise without a cause, all things may, by parity of reason; which is contrary to the first proposition of this chapter, or to the common foundation upon which writers have erected their arguments for the being and attributes of God. To say that free-will is the cause, is an identical proposition; since it is saying, that the power of doing different things, the previous circumstances remaining the same, is the cause that this may be done, *viz.* that either *A* or *a* may follow the same previous circumstances. Or, if we put for philosophical free-will the power of doing things without a cause, it will be a word of nearly the same import as chance. For chance is the ignorance or denial of a cause. It will therefore be as unfit to ascribe a real causality to free-will as to chance.

And as free-will is inconsistent with the infinite power of God, so it is with his infinite knowledge also. For infinite knowledge must include the knowledge

of all future things, as well as of all past and present ones. Besides, past, present and future, are all present with respect to God, as has been observed before. Infinite knowledge must therefore include prescience. But free-will does not allow of prescience. Knowledge of all kinds presupposes the certainty of the thing known, *i. e.* presupposes that it is determined in respect of time, place, manner, &c. *i. e.* presupposes it to be necessary. Thus, if we consider any thing as known certainly, or certain simply, such as a mathematical truth, a past fact, &c. we shall find it to be necessary, and that it cannot be otherwise than it now is, or was formerly; which is the contrary to what is supposed of the actions of creatures endued with free-will. These actions, therefore, cannot be known, or foreknown, not being the objects of knowledge.

The maintainers of necessity do indeed deny, that there is any such thing as uncertainty at all; unless as far as this is put relatively for the limitation of knowledge in any being, so that the thing called uncertain may or may not be, for any thing that this being knows to the contrary. But if they do, for argument's sake, allow such a thing as absolute uncertainty, *i. e.* that a thing either may or may not be, it is plain, that this absolute uncertainty must include the relative, *i. e.* exclude knowledge and foreknowledge. That action of *B* which either may or may not be, cannot be known certainly to be by *A*, because it may not be; it cannot be known not to be, because it may be. Suppose *A* to make conjectures concerning any future action of *B*. Then this action may or may not be, for any thing *A* knows to the contrary; it also may or may not be in itself, provided there be any such thing as absolute uncertainty. Suppose *A*'s conjectures to pass into a well-grounded probability of a high degree, that the action will  
happen,

happen, then both the relative and absolute *may not*, are reduced to narrow limits. Suppose *A*'s conjectures to arise to knowledge, or certainty, then both the relative and absolute *may not*, vanish. *A* cannot know, or be certain, that a thing will happen, at the same time that it may or may not happen for any thing that he knows to the contrary; nor can a thing be relatively certain, and absolutely uncertain. *A*'s foreknowledge does therefore imply relative certainty, this requires absolute certainty; and absolute certainty is in express terms opposite to philosophical free-will. Foreknowledge is therefore inconsistent with free-will; or rather free-will, if it were possible, would exclude foreknowledge. It is not therefore possible.

Nor does it alter the case here to allege, that God's infinite knowledge must extend infinitely farther than man's, and, consequently, may extend to things uncertain in themselves, since the very terms *knowledge* and *uncertain* are inconsistent. To make them consistent, we must affix some new and different sense to one of them, which would be to give up either the divine foreknowledge or free-will in reality, while we pretend in words to maintain them. If God's knowledge be supposed to differ so much from man's in this simple essential circumstance, that the certainty of it does not imply the certainty of the thing known, we lose all conception of it. And if the same liberties were used with the divine power and benevolence, we should lose all conception of the divine nature.

To which it may be added, that the reasoning in the last paragraph but one, concerning the knowledge of the being *A*, is not at all affected, or altered, by his rank, as to intelligence. Suppose his intellectual capacities to be greater and greater perpetually, still all things remain precisely the same, without the



least variation. They will therefore, according to the analogy of ultimate ratios, remain precisely the same though his knowledge be supposed infinite. It follows, therefore, that God's infinite and certain knowledge, or his foreknowledge, is as inconsistent with philosophical free-will, as man's finite, but certain, knowledge or foreknowledge.

## C H A P. II.

*Of the TRUTH of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION.*

To believe the christian religion, is to believe that *Moses* and the prophets, *Christ* and his apostles, were endued with divine authority, that they had a commission from God to act and teach as they did, and that he will verify their declarations concerning future things, and especially those concerning a future life, by the event; or, in other words, it is to receive the scriptures as our rule of life, and the foundation of all our hopes and fears. And as all those who regulate their faith and practice by the scriptures are christians; so all those who disclaim that name, and pass under the general title of unbelievers, do also disavow this regard to the scriptures. But there are various classes of unbelievers. Some appear to treat the scriptures as mere forgeries; others allow them to be the genuine writings of those whose names they bear, but suppose them to abound with fictions, not only in the miraculous, but also in the common part of the history; others, again, allow this part, but reject that; and, lastly, there are others who seem to allow the truth of the principal facts, both common and miraculous, contained in the scriptures, and yet still call in question its divine authority, as a rule of life, and an evidence of a happy futurity under Christ our saviour and king. He, therefore, that would satisfy himself or others in the truth of the christian religion, as opposed by

F 4

these

these several classes of unbelievers, must inquire into these three things:

First, The genuineness of the books of the Old and New Testaments.

Secondly, The truth of the principal facts contained in them, both common and miraculous. And,

Thirdly, Their divine authority.

I will endeavour, therefore, to state some of the chief evidences for each of these important points, having first premised three preparatory propositions, or lemmas, whereby the evidence for any one of them may be transferred upon the other two.

### P R O P. XVII.

*The Genuineness of the Scriptures proves the Truth of the principal Facts contained in them.*

FOR, First, It is very rare to meet with any genuine writings of the historical kind, in which the principal facts are not true; unless where both the motives which engaged the author to falsify, and the circumstances which gave some plausibility to the fiction, are apparent; neither of which can be alleged in the present case with any colour of reason. Where the writer of a history appears to the world as such, not only his moral sense, but his regard to his character and his interest, are strong motives not to falsify in notorious matters; he must therefore have stronger motives from the opposite quarter, and also a favourable conjuncture of circumstances, before he can attempt this.

Secondly, As this is rare in general, so it is much more rare, where the writer treats of things that happened in his own time, and under his own cognizance or direction, and communicates his history to persons under the same circumstances. All which may be said of the writers of the scripture history.

That

That this, and the following arguments, may be applied with more ease and clearness, I will here, in one view, refer the books of the Old and New Testaments to their proper authors. I suppose then, that the Pentateuch consists of the writings of *Moses*, put together by *Samuel*, with a very few additions; that the books of *Joshua* and *Judges* were, in like manner, collected by him; and the book of *Ruth*, with the first part of the first book of *Samuel*, written by him; that the latter part of the first book of *Samuel*, and the second book, were written by the prophets who succeeded *Samuel*, suppose *Nathan* and *Gad*; that the books of *Kings* and *Chronicles* are extracts from the records of the succeeding prophets concerning their own times, and from the public genealogical tables, made by *Ezra*; that the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* are collections of like records, some written by *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* and some by their predecessors; that the book of *Esther* was written by some eminent Jew, in or near the times of the transaction there recorded, perhaps *Mordecai*; the book of *Job* by a Jew of an uncertain time; the *Psalms* by *David*, and other pious persons; the books of *Proverbs* and *Canticles* by *Solomon*; the book of *Ecclesiastes* by *Solomon*, or perhaps by a Jew of later times, speaking in his person, but not with an intention to make him pass for the author; the prophecies by the prophets whose names they bear; and the books of the New Testament by the persons to whom they are usually ascribed. There are many internal evidences, and in the case of the New Testament many external evidences also, by which these books may be shewn to belong to the authors here named. Or, if there be any doubts, they are merely of a critical nature, and do not at all affect the genuineness of the books, nor alter the application of these arguments, or not materially. Thus, if the Epistle to the *Hebrews* be supposed written, not by *St. Paul*, but by *Clement* or *Barnabas*, or any other of their cotemporaries, the evidence therein



therein given to the miracles performed by Christ, and his followers, will not be at all invalidated thereby.

Thirdly, The great importance of the facts mentioned in the scriptures makes it still more improbable, that the several authors should either have attempted to falsify, or have succeeded in such an attempt. This is an argument for the truth of the facts, which proves the genuineness of the books at the same time, as I shall shew below in a distinct proposition. However, the truth of the facts is inferred more directly from their importance, if the genuineness of the scriptures be previously allowed. The same thing may be observed of the great number of particular circumstances of time, place, persons, &c. mentioned in the scriptures, and of the harmony of the books with themselves, and with each other. These are arguments both for the genuineness of the books, and truth of the facts distinctly considered, and also arguments for deducing the truth from the genuineness. And indeed the arguments for the general truth of the history of any age or nation, where regular records have been kept, are so interwoven together, and support each other in such a variety of ways, that it is extremely difficult to keep the ideas of them distinct, not to anticipate, and not to prove more than the exactness of method requires one to prove. Or, in other words, the inconsistency of the contrary supposition is so great, that they can scarce stand long enough to be confuted. Let any one try this in the history of *France* or *England*, *Greece* or *Rome*.

Fourthly, If the books of the Old and New Testaments were written by the persons to whom they were ascribed above, *i. e.* if they be genuine, the moral characters of these writers afford the strongest assurance, that the facts asserted by them are true. Falsehoods and frauds of a common nature shock the moral sense of common men, and are rarely met with,  
except

except in persons of abandoned characters: how inconsistent then must those of the most glaring and impious nature be with the highest moral characters! That such characters are due to the sacred writers, appears from the writings themselves by an internal evidence; but there is also strong external evidence in many cases; and indeed this point is allowed in general by unbelievers. The sufferings which several of the writers underwent both in life and death, in attestation of the facts delivered by them, is a particular argument in favour of these.

Fifthly, The arguments here alleged for proving the truth of the scripture history from the genuineness of the books, are as conclusive in respect of the miraculous facts, as of the common ones. But besides this we may observe, that if we allow the genuineness of the books to be a sufficient evidence of the common facts mentioned in them, the miraculous facts must be allowed also, from their close connection with the common ones. It is necessary to admit both or neither. It is not to be conceived, that *Moses* should have delivered the *Israelites* from their slavery in *Egypt*, or conducted them through the wilderness for forty years, at all, in such manner as the common history represents, unless we suppose the miraculous facts intermixed with it to be true also. In like manner, the fame of Christ's miracles, the multitudes which followed him, the adherence of his disciples, the jealousy and hatred of the chief priests, scribes and pharisees, with many other facts of a common nature, are impossible to be accounted for, unless we allow, that he did really work miracles. And the same observations hold in general of the other parts of the scripture history.

Sixthly, There is even a particular argument in favour of the miraculous part of the scripture history, to be drawn from the reluctance of mankind to receive miraculous facts. It is true that this reluctance  
is

is greater in some ages and nations than in others; and probable reasons may be assigned why this reluctance was, in general, less in ancient times than in the present (which, however, are presumptions that some real miracles were then wrought): but it must always be considerable from the very frame of the human mind, and would be particularly so amongst the *Jews* at the time of Christ's appearance, as they had then been without miracles for four hundred years, or more. Now this reluctance must make both the writers and readers very much upon their guard; and if it be now one of the chief prejudices against revealed religion, as unbelievers unanimously assert, it is but reasonable to allow also, that it would be a strong check upon the publication of a miraculous history at or near the time when the miracles were said to be performed, *i. e.* it will be a strong confirmation of such an history, if its genuineness be granted previously.

And, upon the whole, we may certainly conclude, that the principal facts, both common and miraculous, mentioned in the scriptures, must be true, if their genuineness be allowed. The objection against all miraculous facts will be considered below after the other arguments for the truth of the scripture miracles have been alleged.

The converse of this proposition is also true, *i. e.* if the principal facts mentioned in the scriptures be true, they must be genuine writings. And though this converse proposition may, at first sight, appear to be of little importance for the establishment of christianity, inasmuch as the genuineness of the scriptures is only made use of as a medium whereby to prove the truth of the facts mentioned in them, yet it will be found otherwise upon farther examination. For there are many evidences for the truth of particular facts mentioned in the scriptures, such, for instance, as those taken from natural history, and the  
cotemporary

cotemporary profane history, which no ways presuppose, but, on the contrary, prove the genuineness of the scriptures; and this genuineness, thus proved, may, by the arguments alleged under this proposition, be extended to infer the truth of the rest of the facts. Which is not to argue in a circle, and to prove the truth of the scripture history from its truth; but to prove the truth of those facts, which are not attested by natural or civil history, from those which are, by the medium of the genuineness of the scriptures.

### P R O P. XVIII.

*The Genuineness of the Scriptures proves their divine Authority.*

THE truth of this proposition, as it respects the book of *Daniel*, seems to have been acknowledged by *Porphyry*, inasmuch as he could no ways invalidate the divine authority of this book, implied by the accomplishment of the prophecies therein delivered, but by asserting, that they were written after the event, *i. e.* were forgeries. But the same thing holds of many of the other books of the Old and New Testaments, many of them having unquestionable evidences of the divine foreknowledge, if they be allowed genuine. I reserve the prophetic evidences to be discussed hereafter, and therefore shall only suggest the following instances here, in order to illustrate the proposition, *viz.* *Moses's* prophecy concerning the captivity of the *Israelites*, of a state not yet erected; *Isaiab's* concerning *Cyrus*; *Jeremiab's* concerning the duration of the *Babylonish* captivity; *Christ's* concerning the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the captivity that was to follow; *St. John's* concerning the great corruption of the christian church; and *Daniel's* concerning the fourth empire in its declension; which last was extant in *Porphyry's* time  
at



at least, *i. e.* before the events which it so fitly represents.

The same thing follows from the sublimity and excellence of the doctrines contained in the scriptures. These no ways suit the supposed authors, *i. e.* the ages when they lived, their educations or occupations; and therefore, if they were the real authors, there is a necessity of admitting the divine assistance.

The converse of this proposition, viz. that the divine authority of the scriptures infers their genuineness, will, I suppose, be readily acknowledged by all. And it may be used for the same purposes as the converse of the last. For there are several evidences for the divine authority of the scriptures, which are direct and immediate, and prior to the consideration both of their genuineness, and of the truth of the facts contained in them. Of this kind is the character of Christ, as it may be collected from his discourses and actions related in the gospels. The great and manifest superiority of this to all other characters, real and fictitious, proves, at once, his divine mission, exclusively of all other considerations. Suppose now the genuineness of St. *Luke's* gospel to be deduced in this way, the genuineness of the *Acts* of the Apostles may be deduced from it, and of St. *Paul's* Epistles from the *Acts*, by the usual critical methods. And when the genuineness of the *Acts* of the Apostles, and of St. *Paul's* Epistles, is thus deduced, the truth of the facts mentioned in them will follow from it by the last proposition; and their divine authority by this.

## P R O P. XIX.

*The Truth of the principal Facts contained in the Scriptures proves their divine Authority.*

THIS proposition may be proved two ways; First, exclusively of the evidences of natural religion, such as those delivered in the last chapter; and, Secondly, from the previous establishment of the great truths of natural religion. And, First,

It is evident, that the great power, knowledge, and benevolence, which appeared in Christ, the prophets and apostles, according to the scripture accounts, do, as it were, command assent and submission from all those who receive these accounts as historical truths; and that, though they are not able to deduce, or have not, in fact, deduced the evidences of natural religion; nay, though they should have many doubts about them. The frame of the human mind is such, that the scripture history, allowed to be true, must convince us, that Christ, the prophets and apostles, were endued with a power greater than human, and acted by the authority of a being of the highest wisdom and goodness.

Secondly, If natural religion be previously established, the truth of the principal facts of the scriptures proves their divine authority, in an easier and more convincing manner.

For, First, The power shewn in the miracles wrought by Christ, the prophets and apostles, the knowledge in their prophecies, and their good moral characters, shew them to be, in an eminent manner, the children, servants, and messengers, of him, who is now previously acknowledged to be infinite in power, knowledge, and goodness.

Secondly, Christ, the prophets and apostles, make an express claim to a divine mission. Now, it cannot be reconciled to God's moral attributes of justice,

justice, veracity, mercy, &c. that he should permit these persons to make such a claim falsely, and then endue them, or suffer them to be endued, with such credentials, as must support such a false claim. Their claim is not, therefore, a false one, if we admit their credentials; or, in other words, the truth of the principal facts mentioned in the scriptures proves the divine mission of Christ, the prophets, and apostles, *i. e.* the divine authority of the scriptures.

The same observations may be made upon the converse of this proposition, as upon those of the two last.

And thus the genuineness of the scriptures, the truth of the principal facts contained in them, and their divine authority, appear to be so connected with each other, that any one being established upon independent principles, the other two may be inferred from it. The first and second of these points are, indeed, more evidently subservient to the last, than the last is to them; for, if the last be allowed, it is at once all that the believer contends for, whereas some persons appear to admit, or not to reject, the first, or even the second, and yet are ranked under the title of unbelievers. It is necessary to shew to such persons, that the first and second infer each other mutually, and both of them the last; and it may be of some use to shew, that the last infers the two first in such a way, as to cast some light upon itself, without arguing in a circle; the divine authority of one book being made to infer the genuineness of another, or the facts contained in it, *i. e.* its divine authority also.

Here it may not be amiss to say something concerning the divine inspiration of the scriptures. Now there are three different suppositions, which may be made concerning this point.

The first and lowest is, that all the passages delivered by *Moses* and the prophets, as coming from God,

God, and by the evangelists, as the words of Christ, also the revelation given to St. *John* in a divine vision, with all parallel portions of scripture, must be considered as divinely inspired, and as having immediate divine authority; else we cannot allow even common authority to these books; but that the common history, the reasonings of the apostles from the Old Testament, and perhaps some of their opinions, may be considered as coming merely from themselves, and therefore, though highly to be regarded, are not of unquestionable authority. The arguments for this hypothesis may be, that since the scriptures have suffered by transcribers, like other books, a perfect exactness in the original, as to minute particulars, (in which alone it has suffered, or could suffer, from transcribers), is needless; that *Moses* and the prophets, the evangelists and apostles, had natural talents for writing history, applying the scriptures, reasoning, and delivering their opinions; and that God works by natural means, where there are such; that the apostles were ignorant of the true extent of *Christ's* kingdom for a considerable time after his resurrection, and perhaps mistaken about his second coming; that God might intend, that nothing in this world should be perfect, our blessed Lord excepted; that some historical facts seem difficult to be reconciled to one another, and some applications of passages from the Old Testament by the writers of the New, with their reasonings thereupon, inconclusive and unsatisfactory; that the writers themselves no where lay claim to infallibility, when speaking from themselves; and that *Hermas*, *Clemens Romanus*, and *Barnabas*, who were apostolical persons, seem evidently to have reasoned in an inconclusive manner.

The second hypothesis is, that historical incidents of small moment, with matters of a nature foreign to religion, may indeed not have divine authority;



thority; but that all the rest of the scriptures, the reasonings, the application of the prophecies, and even the doctrines of inferior note, must be inspired; else what can be meant by the gifts of the spirit, particularly that of prophecy, *i. e.* of instructing others? How can *Christ's* promise of the Comforter, who should lead his disciples into *all truth*, be fulfilled? Will not the very essentials of religion, the divine mission of *Christ*, providence, and a future state, be weakened by thus supposing the sacred writers to be mistaken in religious points? And though the history and the reasonings of the scriptures have the marks of being written in the same manner as other books, *i. e.* may seem not to be inspired, yet a secret influence might conduct the writers in every thing of moment, even when they did not perceive it, or reflect upon it themselves; it being evident from obvious reasonings, as well as from the foregoing theory, that the natural workings of the mind are not to be distinguished from those, which a being that has a sufficient power over our intellectual frame, might excite in us.

The third and last hypothesis is, that the whole scriptures are inspired, even the most minute historical passages, the salutations, incidental mention of common affairs, &c. The arguments in favour of this hypothesis are, that many parts of scripture appear to have double, or perhaps manifold senses; that not one jot or tittle of the law (*i. e.* of the whole scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments, in an enlarged way of interpretation, which, however, seems justifiable by parallel instances) shall perish; that the Bible, *i. e.* the book of books, as we now have it, appears to have been remarkably distinguished by Providence from all other writings, even of good *Jews* and Christians, and to admit of a vindication in respect of small difficulties, and small seeming inconsistencies, as well as of great ones, every day

day more and more as we advance in knowledge; and that effects of the same kind with divine inspiration, viz. the working of miracles, and the gift of prophecy, subsisted during the times of the authors of the books of the Old and New Testaments, and even in all, or nearly all, of these writers; also that they extended, in some cases, to very minute things.

I will not presume to determine which of these three suppositions approaches nearest to the truth. The following propositions will, I hope, establish the first of them at least, and prove the genuineness of the scriptures, the truth of the facts contained in them, and their divine authority, to such a degree, as that we need not fear to make them the rule of our lives, and the ground of our future expectations; which is all that is absolutely necessary for the proof of the christian religion, and the satisfaction and comfort of religious persons. I even believe, that the following evidences favour the second hypothesis strongly, and exclude all errors and imperfections, of note; nay, I am inclined to believe, that serious, inquisitive men can scarce rest there, but will be led by the successive clearing of difficulties, and unfolding of the most wonderful truths, to believe the whole scriptures to be inspired, and to abound with numberless uses and applications, of which we yet know nothing. Let future ages determine. The evidently miraculous nature of one part, viz. the prophetical, disposes the mind to believe the whole to be far above human invention, or even penetration, till such time as our understandings shall be farther opened by the events which are to precede the second coming of *Christ*. In the mean while, let critics and learned men of all kinds have full liberty to examine the sacred books; and let us be sparing in our censures of each other. *Let us judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come; and then shall every man have praise of God.* Sobriety of mind, humility, and piety, are requisite in

the pursuit of knowledge of every kind, and much more in that of sacred. I have here endeavoured to be impartial to each hypothesis, and just to hint what I apprehend each party would or might say in defence of their own. However, *they are all brethren*, and ought not to *fall out by the way*.

## PROP. XX.

*The Manner in which the Books of the Old and New Testaments have been handed down from Age to Age, proves both their Genuineness, and the Truth of the principal Facts contained in them.*

FOR, First, It resembles the manner in which all other genuine books and true histories have been conveyed down to posterity. As the writings of the *Greek* and *Roman* poets, orators, philosophers and historians, were esteemed by these nations to be transmitted to them by their forefathers in a continued succession, from the times when the respective authors lived, so have the books of the Old Testament by the *Jewish* nation, and those of the New by the *Christians*; and it is an additional evidence in the last case, that the primitive christians were not a distinct nation, but a great multitude of people dispersed through all the nations of the *Roman* empire, and even extending itself beyond the bounds of that empire. As the *Greeks* and *Romans* always believed the principal facts of their historical books, so the *Jews* and *Christians* did more, and never seem to have doubted of the truth of any part of theirs. In short, whatever can be said of the traditional authority due to the *Greek* and *Roman* writers, something analogous to this, and for the most part of greater weight, may be urged for the *Jewish* and *Christian*. Now, I suppose that all sober-minded men admit the books  
usually

usually ascribed to the *Greek* and *Roman* historians, philosophers, &c. to be genuine, and the principal facts related or alluded to in them to be true, and that one chief evidence for this is the general traditionary one here recited. They ought therefore to pay the same regard to the books of the Old and New Testaments, since there are the same or greater reasons for it.

Secondly, If we reconsider the circumstances recited in the last paragraph, it will appear, that these traditionary evidences are sufficient ones; and we shall have a real argument, as well as one *ad hominem*, for receiving books so handed down to us. For it is not to be conceived, that whole nations should either be imposed upon themselves, or concur to deceive others, by forgeries of books or facts. These books and facts must therefore, in general, be genuine and true; and it is a strong additional evidence of this, that all nations must be jealous of forgeries, for the same reasons that we are.

Here it may be objected, that as we reject the prodigies related by the *Greek* and *Roman* writers, though we admit the common history, so we ought also to reject the scripture miracles. To this I answer,

First, That the scripture history is supported by far stronger evidences than the *Greek* or *Roman*, as will appear in the following propositions.

Secondly, That many of the scripture miracles are related by eye-witnesses, and were of a public nature, of long duration, attended by great and lasting effects, inseparably connected with the common history, and evidently suitable to our notions of a wise and good Providence, which cannot be said of those related by the Pagan writers.

Thirdly, That the scripture miracles not attended by these cogent circumstances are supported by their connection with such as are; and that after we have



admitted these, there remains no longer any presumption against those from their miraculous nature.

Fourthly, If there be any small number found amongst the Pagan miracles, attested by such like evidences as the principal ones for the scripture miracles, I do not see how they can be rejected; but it will not follow, that the scripture miracles are false, because some of the Pagan ones are true.

## PROP. XXI.

*The great Importance of the Histories, Precepts, Promises, Threatenings, and Prophecies contained in the Scriptures, are Evidences both of their Genuineness, and of the Truth of the principal Facts mentioned in them.*

THIS is one of the instances in which the evidences for the scriptures are superior, beyond comparison, to those for any other ancient books. Let us take a short review of this importance in its several particulars.

The history of the creation, fall, deluge, longevity of the patriarchs, dispersion of mankind, calling of *Abraham*, descent of *Jacob* with his family into *Egypt*, and the precepts of abstaining from blood, and of circumcision, were of so much concern, either to mankind in general, or to the *Israelites* in particular, and some of them of so extraordinary a nature, as that it could not be an indifferent matter to the people amongst whom the account given of them in *Genesis* was first published, whether they received them or not. Suppose this account to be first published amongst the *Israelites* by *Moses*, and also to be then confirmed by clear, universal, uninterrupted tradition (which is possible and probable, according to the history itself), and it will be easy to conceive, upon this true supposition, how this account should  
be

be handed down from age to age amongst the *Jews*, and received by them as indubitable. Suppose this account to be false, *i. e.* suppose that there were no such evidences and vestiges of these histories and precepts, and it will be difficult to conceive how this could have happened, let the time of publication be as it will. If early, the people would reject the account at once for want of a clear tradition, which the account would itself give them reason to expect. If late, it would be natural to inquire how the author came to be informed of things never known before to others.

If it be said, that he delivered them as communicated to him by revelation (which yet cannot well be said on account of the many references in *Genesis* to the remaining vestiges of the things related), these surprizing, interesting particulars would at least be an embarrassment upon his fictitious credentials, and engage his cotemporaries to look narrowly into them.

If it be said, that there were many cosmogonies and theogonies current amongst the Pagans, which yet are evidently fictions; I answer, that these were, in general, regarded only as amusing fictions; however, that they had some truths in them, either expressed in plain words, or concealed in figures; and that their agreement with the book of *Genesis*, as far as they are consistent with one another, or have any appearance of truth, is a remarkable evidence in favour of this book. It is endless to make all the possible suppositions and objections of this kind; but it appears to me, that the more are made, the more will the truth and genuineness of the scriptures be established thereby.

It ought to be added, in relation to the precepts of abstaining from blood, and circumcision, before-mentioned, that if the first was common to mankind, or was known to have been so, the last peculiar to the descendants of *Abraham*, at the time of the publi-

cation of the book of *Genesis*, this confirms it; if otherwise, would contribute to make it rejected. If neither the practices themselves, nor any vestiges of them, subsisted at all, the book must be rejected. The difficulty of deducing these practices from the principles of human nature ought to be considered here; as it tends to prove their divine original agreeably to the accounts given of them in *Genesis*.

Let us next come to the law of *Moses*. This was extremely burdensome, expensive, severe, particularly upon the crime of idolatry, to which all mankind were then extravagantly prone, and absurd, according to the common judgment of mankind, in the instances of forbidding to provide themselves with horses for war, and commanding all the males of the whole nation to appear at *Jerusalem* three times in a year. At the same time, it claims a divine authority every where, and appeals to facts of the most notorious kinds, and to customs and ceremonies of the most peculiar nature, as the memorials of these facts. We cannot conceive, then, that any nation, with such motives to reject, and such opportunities of detecting, the forgery of the books of *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*, should yet receive them, and submit to this heavy yoke. That they should often throw it off in part, and for a time, and rebel against the divine authority of their law, though sufficiently evidenced, is easily to be accounted for from what we see and feel in ourselves and others every day; but that they should ever return and repent, ever submit to it, unless it had divine authority, is utterly incredible. It was not a matter of such small importance, as that they could content themselves with a superficial examination, with a less examination than would be sufficient to detect so notorious a forgery; and this holds at whatever time we suppose these books to be published.

That

That the *Jews* did thus submit to the law of *Moses*, is evident from the books of the Old and New Testaments, if we allow them the least truth and genuineness, or even from profane writers; nay, I may say, from the present observance of it by the *Jews* scattered through all the kingdoms of the world.

If it be said, that other nations have ascribed divine authority to their lawgivers, and submitted to very severe laws; I answer, First, That the pretences of lawgivers amongst the Pagans to inspiration, and the submission of the people to them, may be accounted for in the degree in which they are found, from the then circumstances of things, without having recourse to real inspiration; and particularly, that if we admit the patriarchal revelations related and intimated by *Moses*, and his own divine legation, it will appear, that the heathen lawgivers copied after these; which is a strong argument for admitting them. Secondly, That there is no instance amongst the Pagans, of a body of laws being produced at once, and remaining without addition afterwards; but that they were compiled by degrees, according to the exigencies of the state, the prevalence of a particular faction, or the authority of some particular persons, who were all styled lawgivers, as *Draco* and *Solon* at *Athens*: that they were made, in general, not to curb, but humour, the genius of the people; and were afterwards repealed and altered from the same causes: whereas the body politic of the *Israelites* took upon itself a complete form at once, and has preserved this form in great measure to the present time, and that under the highest external disadvantages; which is an instance quite without parallel, and shews the great opinion which they had of their law, *i. e.* its great importance to them.

If it be said, that the laws of the *Israelites* were not perhaps imposed at once, but grew up by degrees,  
as



as in other nations, this will make the difficulty of receiving the books of *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*, in which the contrary, with all the particular circumstances, is asserted, greater than ever. In short, of all the fictions or forgeries that can happen amongst any people, the most improbable is that of their body of civil laws; and it seems to be utterly impossible in the case of the law of *Moses*.

The next part of the scriptures, whose importance we are to consider, is the history contained in the books of *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Ruth*, *Samuel*, *Kings*, *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, and extending from the Death of *Moses* to the re-establishment of the *Jews* after the *Babylonish* captivity, by *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*. Now, in this history are the following important facts, most of which must be supposed to leave such vestiges of themselves, either external visible ones, or internal in the minds and memories of the people, as would verify them, if true; make them be rejected, if false. The conquest of the land of *Canaan*, the division of it, and the appointment of cities for the priests and Levites by *Joshua*; the frequent slave-ries of the *Israelites* to the neighbouring kings, and their deliverance by the judges; the erection of a kingdom by *Samuel*; the translation of this kingdom from *Saul's* family to *David*, with his conquests; the glory of *Solomon's* kingdom; the building of the temple; the division of the kingdom; the idolatrous worship set up at *Dan* and *Bethel*; the captivity of the *Israelites* by the kings of *Assyria*; the captivity of the *Jews* by *Nebuchadnezzar*; the destruction of their temple; their return under *Cyrus*, rebuilding the temple under *Darius Hystaspis*, and re-establishment under *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, by *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*; these events are some of them the most glorious, some of them the most shameful that can well happen to any people. How can we reconcile forgeries of such opposite kinds, and especially

cially as they are interwoven together? But, indeed, the facts are of such consequence, notoriety, and permanency in their effects, that neither could any particular persons amongst the *Israelites* first project the design of feigning them, nor their own people concur with such a design, nor the neighbouring nations permit the fiction to pass. Nothing could make a jealous multitude amongst the *Israelites* or neighbouring nations acquiesce, but the invincible evidence of the facts here alleged. And the same observations hold of numberless other facts of lesser note, which it would be tedious to recount; and of miraculous facts as much, or rather more than others. Besides which, it is to be noted, that all these have such various necessary connections with each other, that they cannot be separated, as has been already remarked.

And all this will, I presume, be readily acknowledged, upon supposition that the several books were published in or near the times of the facts therein recorded. But, say the objectors, this will not hold in so strong a manner, if the books be published after these times. Let us take an extreme case then, and suppose all these historical books forged by *Ezra*. But this is evidently impossible. Things of so important and notorious a kind, so glorious and so shameful to the people, for whose sake they were forged, would have been rejected with the utmost indignation, unless there were the strongest and most genuine footsteps of these things already amongst the people. They were therefore in part true. But many additions were made by *Ezra*, say the objectors. I answer, if these were of importance, the difficulty returns. If not, then all the important facts are true. Besides, what motive could any one have for making additions, of no importance? Again, if there were any ancient writings extant, *Ezra* must either copy after them, which destroys the present supposition; or

or differ from and oppose them, which would betray him. If there were no such ancient writings, the people could not but inquire in matters of importance, for what reasons *Ezra* was so particular in things of which there was neither any memory, nor account in writing. If it be said, that the people did regard what *Ezra* had thus forged, but let it pass uncontradicted; this is again to make the things of small or no importance. Besides, why should *Ezra* write, if no one would read or regard? Farther, *Ezra* must, like all other men, have friends, enemies and rivals; and some or all of these would have been a check upon him, and a security against him in matters of importance.

If, instead of supposing *Ezra* to have forged all these books at once, we suppose them forged successively, one, two, or three centuries after the facts related; we shall, from this intermediate supposition, have (besides the difficulty of accounting for such a regular succession of impostures in matters so important) a mixture of the difficulties recited in the two preceding paragraphs, the sum total of which will be the same, or nearly the same, as in either of those cases. And, upon the whole, the forgery of the annals of the *Israelites* appears to be impossible, as well as that of the body of their civil laws.

If it be said, that the histories and annals of other nations have many fictions and falsehoods in them; I answer, that the superior importance of the events which happened to the *Jewish* nation, and the miraculous nature of many of them, occasioned there being recorded at the then present times, in the way of simple narration, the command of God also concurring, as it seems; and that thus all addition, variety, and embellishment, was prevented: whereas the histories of the originals of other nations were not committed to writing till long after the events, after they had been corrupted and obscured by numberless

berless fables and fictions, as is well known. There are many other circumstances peculiar to the *Jewish* history, which establish its truth even in the minutest things, as I shall shew in the following propositions; and I hope the reader will see, in the progress of the argument, that the same method of reasoning which proves the *Jewish* history to be rigorously exact, proves also, that the histories of other nations may be expected to be partly true, and partly false, as they are agreed to be by all learned and sober-minded men.

I pass over the books of *Esther*, *Job*, the *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Canticles*, as not having much relation to this proposition; and proceed to the consideration of the Prophecies.

These contain the most important precepts, promises, threatenings, and predictions, *i. e.* prophecies peculiarly so called, besides the indirect and incidental mention of the great events recorded in the historical books. And as they are full of the severest reproofs and denunciations against all ranks, king, governors and great men subordinate to him, priests, prophets, and people, one cannot expect, that they should be favourably received by any, but those of the best moral characters; and these must be the first to detect and expose a forgery, if there was any. So that the prophecies, if they were forgeries, could not be able to stand so rigorous an examination as the importance of the case would prompt all ranks to. And here all the arguments before used to shew, that the historical books could neither be forged at the time of the facts, nor so late as *Ezra's* time, nor in any intermediate one, are applicable with the same or even greater force. Besides which, it is to be observed of the predictions in particular, that, if they were published before the events, they could not be forgeries; if afterwards, there would not be wanting amongst the *Jews* many persons of the same disposition with *Porphyry*, and the present objectors to the



the genuineness of the prophecies, and the truth of the facts related or implied in them, who upon that supposition would have met with success, as *Porphyry*, and the ancient objectors would have done long ago, had their objections been solid. Infidelity is the natural and necessary product of human wickedness and weakness; we see it, in all other things, as well as in religion, whensoever the interests and passions of men are opposite to truth; and the present objectors to the truth of revealed religion may be assured, that the ancient ones, the murmuring *Israelites* in the wilderness, the rebellious *Jews* before Christ, and both *Jews* and *Gentiles* since Christ, have done justice to their cause.

We come, in the last place, to consider the importance of the books of the New Testament. Whoever then received these in ancient times as genuine and true, must not only forsake all sinful pleasures, but expose himself to various hardships and dangers, and even to death itself. They had indeed a future glory promised to them, with which the sufferings of the present time were not worthy to be compared. But then this glory, being future, must be supported with the most incontestable evidences; else it could have no power against the opposite motives; and both together must so rouse the mind, as to make men exert themselves to the uttermost, till they had received full satisfaction. Besides which, it is to be observed, that even joy, and the greatness of an expectation, incline men to disbelieve, and to examine with a scrupulous exactness, as well as fear and dislike.

As to those who did not receive the doctrines of the New Testament, and the facts there related and implied, they would have sufficient motives to detect the forgery or falsehood, had there been any such. They were all condemned for their unbelief; many for their gross vices; the *Jew* for his darling partiality to his own nation, and ceremonial law; and the

the *Gentile* for his idolatry and polytheism; and the most dreadful punishments threatened to all in a future state. Now these were important charges, and alarming considerations, which, if they did not put men upon a fair examination, would, at least, make them desirous to find fault, to detect and expose, and, if they had discovered any fraud, to publish it with the utmost triumph. The books of the New Testament could not but be of so much importance to the unbelievers of the primitive times, as to excite them to vigilance and earnestness, in endeavouring to discredit and destroy them. All which is abundantly confirmed by the history of those times. And indeed cases of the same kind, though not of the same degree, occur now to daily observation, which the reader will do well to call to mind. Thus it comes to pass on one hand, that frauds and impostures are crushed in the birth; and, on the other, that wicked men labour against the truth in the most unreasonable and inconsistent ways, and are led on from one degree of obstinacy, prevarication, and infatuation, to another, without limits.

It may be added here, that the persons reprovèd and condemned in the Gospels, in the *Acts* of the Apostles, by St. *Paul* in his Epistles, by St. *Peter* in his second Epistle, by St. *John* and St. *Jude* in their Epistles, and by St. *John* in the *Revelation*, viz. the five churches, and the *Nicolaitans*, could not but endeavour to vindicate themselves. The books were all of a public nature, and these reproofs particularly so, as being intended to guard others.

I have now gone through the several parts of the scripture, and shewn briefly how the importance of each would be a security against forgery and fiction in that part. I will now add some general evidences to the same purpose.

First, then, It is certain, that both *Jews* and *Christians* have undergone the severest persecutions and sufferings

sufferings on account of their sacred books, and yet never could be prevailed with to deliver them up: which shews that they thought them of the highest importance, most genuine and true.

Secondly, The preservation of the law of *Moses*, which is probably the first book that was ever written in any language, while so many others more modern have been lost, shews the great regard paid to it. The same holds in a less degree of most of the other books of the Old Testament, since most of them are ancients than the oldest *Greek* historians. And as the records of all the neighbouring nations are lost; we must suppose those of the *Jews* to have been preserved, from their importance, or some other such cause, as may be an equal evidence of their genuineness and truth.

Thirdly, The great importance of all the sacred books appears from the many early translations and paraphrases of them. The same translations and paraphrases must be an effectual means of securing their integrity and purity, if we could suppose any design to corrupt them.

Fourthly, The hesitation and difficulty with which a few books of the New Testament were received into the canon, shew the great care and concern of the primitive christians about their canon, *i. e.* the high importance of the books received into it; and are therefore a strong evidence, first, for the genuineness and truth of the books which were received without hesitation; and then for these others, since they were received universally at last.

Fifthly, The great religious hatred and animosity which subsisted between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, and between several of the ancient sects amongst the christians, shew of what importance they all thought their sacred books; and would make them watch over one another with a jealous eye.

## PROP. XXII.

*The Language, Style, and Manner of Writing used in the Books of the Old and New Testaments, are Arguments of their Genuineness.*

HERE I observe, First, That the *Hebrew* language, in which the Old Testament was written, being the language of an ancient people, and one that had little intercourse with their neighbours, and whose neighbours also spake a language that had great affinity with their own, would not change so fast as modern languages have done, since nations have been variously mixed with one another, and trade, arts, and sciences, greatly extended. Yet some changes there must be, in passing from the time of *Moses* to that of *Malachi*. Now, I apprehend, that the Biblical *Hebrew* corresponds to this criterion with so much exactness, that a considerable argument may be deduced thence in favour of the genuineness of the books of the Old Testament.

Secondly, The books of the Old Testament have too considerable a diversity of style to be the work either of one *Jew* (for a *Jew* he must be on account of the language), or of any set of cotemporary *Jews*. If therefore they be all forgeries, there must be a succession of impostors in different ages, who have concurred to impose upon posterity, which is inconceivable. To suppose part forged, and part genuine, is very harsh, neither would this supposition, if admitted, be satisfactory.

Thirdly, The *Hebrew* language ceased to be spoken, as a living language, soon after the time of the *Babylonish* captivity: but it would be difficult or impossible to forge any thing in it, after it was become a dead language. For there was no grammar made for the *Hebrew* till many ages after; and, as it



is difficult to write in a dead language with exactness, even by the help of a grammar, so it seems impossible without it. All the books of the Old Testament must therefore be, nearly, as ancient as the *Babylonish* captivity; and, since they could not all be written in the same age, some must be considerably more ancient; which would bring us again to a succession of conspiring impostors.

Fourthly, This last remark may perhaps afford a new argument for the genuineness of the book of *Daniel*, if any were wanting. But indeed the Septuagint translation shews both this, and all the other books of the Old Testament to have been considered as ancient books, soon after the times of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, at least.

Fifthly, There is a simplicity of style, and an unaffected manner of writing, in all the books of the Old Testament; which is a very strong evidence of their genuineness, even exclusively of the suitableness of this circumstance to the times of the supposed authors.

Sixthly, The style of the New Testament is also simple and unaffected, and perfectly suited to the time, places, and persons. Let it be observed farther, that the use of words and phrases is such, also the ideas, and method of reasoning, as that the books of the New Testament could be written by none but persons originally *Jews*; which would bring the inquiry into a little narrower compass, if there was any occasion for this.

One may also observe, that the narrations and precepts of both Old and New Testament are delivered without hesitation; the writers teach as having authority; which circumstance is peculiar to those, who have both a clear knowledge of what they deliver, and a perfect integrity of heart.

## P R O P. XXIII.

*The very great Number of particular Circumstances of Time, Place, Persons, &c. mentioned in the Scriptures, are Arguments both of their Genuineness and Truth.*

THAT the reader may understand what I mean by these particular circumstances, I will recite some of the principal heads, under which they may be classed.

There are then mentioned in the book of *Genesis*, the rivers of paradise, the generations of the antediluvian patriarchs, the deluge with its circumstances, the place where the ark rested, the building of the tower of *Babel*, the confusion of tongues, the dispersion of mankind, or the division of the earth amongst the posterity of *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, the generations of the postdiluvian patriarchs, with the gradual shortening of human life after the flood, the sojournings of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, with many particulars of the state of *Canaan*, and the neighbouring countries in their times, the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, the state of the land of *Edom*, both before and after *Esau*'s time, and the descent of *Jacob* into *Egypt*, with the state of *Egypt* before *Moses*'s time.

In the book of *Exodus* are the plagues of *Egypt*, the institution of the passover, the passage through the *Red Sea*, with the destruction of *Pharaoh* and his host there, the miracle of manna, the victory over the *Amalekites*, the solemn delivery of the law from mount *Sinai*, many particular laws both moral and ceremonial, the worship of the golden calf, and a very minute description of the tabernacle, priests' garments, ark, &c.

In *Leviticus* we have a collection of ceremonial laws, with all their particularities, and an account of the deaths of *Nadab* and *Abihu*.

The book of *Numbers* contains the first and second numberings of the several tribes with their genealogies, the peculiar offices of the three several families of the *Levites*, many ceremonial laws, the journeyings and encampments of the people in the wilderness during forty years, with the relation of some remarkable events which happened in this period; as the searching of the land, the rebellion of *Korab*, the victories over *Arad*, *Sibon*, and *Og*, with the division of the kingdoms of the two last among the *Gadites*, *Reubenites*, and *Manassites*, the history of *Balak* and *Balaam*, and the victory over the *Midianites*, all described with the several particularities of time, place, and persons.

The book of *Deuteronomy* contains a recapitulation of many things contained in the three last books, with a second delivery of the law, chiefly the moral one, by *Moses*, upon the borders of *Canaan*, just before his death, with an account of this.

In the book of *Joshua*, we have the passage over *Jordan*, the conquest of the land of *Canaan* in detail, and the division of it among the tribes, including a minute geographical description.

The book of *Judges* recites a great variety of public transactions, with the private origin of some. In all, the names of times, places, and persons, both among the *Israelites*, and the neighbouring nations, are noted with particularity and simplicity.

In the book of *Ruth* is a very particular account of the genealogy of *David*, with several incidental circumstances,

The books of *Samuel*, *Kings*, *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, contain the transactions of the kings before the captivity, and governors afterwards, all delivered in the same circumstantial manner. And  
here

here the particular account of the regulations sacred and civil established by *David*, and of the building of the temple by *Solomon*, the genealogies given in the beginning of the first book of *Chronicles*, and the lists of the persons who returned, sealed, &c. after the captivity, in the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, deserve especial notice, in the light in which we are now considering things.

The book of *Esther* contains a like account of a very remarkable event, with the institution of a festival in memory of it.

The book of *Psalms* mentions many historical facts in an incidental way; and this, with the books of *Job*, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Canticles*, allude to the manners and customs of ancient times in various ways.

In the *Prophecies* there are some historical relations; and in the other parts the indirect mention of facts, times, places, and persons, is interwoven with the predictions in the most copious and circumstantial manner.

If we come to the New Testament, the same observations present themselves at first view. We have the names of friends and enemies, *Jews*, *Greeks*, and *Romans*, obscure and illustrious, the times, places, and circumstances of facts specified directly, and alluded to indirectly, with various references to the customs and manners of those times.

Now here I observe, First, That, in fact, we do not ever find, that forged or false accounts of things superabound thus in particularities. There is always some truth where there are considerable particularities related, and they always seem to bear some proportion to one another. Thus there is a great want of the particulars of time, place, and persons, in *Manetho's* account of the *Egyptian* dynasties, *Ctesias's* of the *Assyrian* kings, and those which the technical chronologers have given of the ancient kingdoms of



*Greece*; and, agreeably thereto, these accounts have much fiction and falsehood, with some truth: whereas *Thucydides's* history of the *Peloponnesian* war, and *Cæsar's* of the war in *Gaul*, in both which the particulars of time, place, and persons, are mentioned, are universally esteemed true to a great degree of exactness.

Secondly, A forger, or a relater of falsehoods, would be careful not to mention so great a number of particulars, since this would be to put into his reader's hands criterions whereby to detect him. Thus we may see one reason of the fact mentioned in the last paragraph, and which in confirming that fact confirms the proposition here to be proved.

Thirdly, A forger, or a relater of falsehoods, could scarce furnish out such lists of particulars. It is easy to conceive how faithful records kept from time to time by persons concerned in the transactions should contain such lists; nay, it is natural to expect them in this case, from that local memory which takes strong possession of the fancy in those who have been present at transactions; but it would be a work of the highest invention, and greatest stretch of genius to raise from nothing such numberless particularities, as are almost every where to be met with in the scriptures. The account given of memory, imagination, and invention, in the foregoing part of these observations, sets this matter in a strong light.

There is a circumstance relating to the gospels, which deserves particular notice in this place. *St. Matthew* and *St. John* were apostles; and therefore, since they accompanied Christ, must have this local memory of his journeyings and miracles. *St. Mark* was a Jew of *Judæa*, and a friend of *St. Peter's*; and therefore may either have had this local memory himself, or have written chiefly from *St. Peter*, who had. But *St. Luke*, being a proselyte of *Antioch*, not converted perhaps till several years after Christ's resurrection,

tion, and receiving his accounts from different eye-witnesses, as he says himself, could have no regard to that order of time, which a local memory would suggest. Let us see how the gospels answer to these positions. *St. Matthew's* then appears to be in exact order of time, and to be a regulator to *St. Mark's*, and *St. Luke's*, shewing *St. Mark's* to be nearly so, but *St. Luke's* to have little or no regard to the order of time in his account of Christ's ministry. *St. John's* gospel is, like *St. Matthew's*, in order of time; but as he wrote after all the rest, and with a view only of recording some remarkable particulars, such as Christ's actions before he left *Judæa* to go to preach in *Galilee*, his disputes with the *Jews* of *Jerusalem*, and his discourses to the apostles at his last supper, there was less opportunity for his local memory to shew itself. However, his recording what past before Christ's going into *Galilee* might be in part from this cause, as *St. Matthew's* omission of it was probably from his want of this local memory. For it appears, that *St. Matthew* resided in *Galilee*; and that he was not converted till some time after Christ's coming thither to preach. Now this suitableness of the four gospels to their reputed authors, in a circumstance of so subtle and reclusé a nature, is quite inconsistent with the supposition of fiction or forgery. This remark is chiefly taken from *Sir Isaac Newton's* chapter concerning the times of the birth and passion of Christ, in his comment on *Daniel*.

Fourthly, If we could suppose the persons who forged the books of the Old and New Testaments, to have furnished their readers with the great variety of particulars above-mentioned, notwithstanding the two reasons here alleged against it, we cannot however, conceive, but that the persons of those times when the books were published, must by the help of these criterions have detected and exposed the for-

geries or falsehoods. For these criterions are so attested by allowed facts, as at this time, and in this remote corner of the world, to establish the truth and genuineness of the scriptures, as may appear even from this chapter, and much more from the writings of commentators, sacred critics, and such other learned men, as have given the historical evidences for revealed religion in detail; and by parity of reason they would suffice even now to detect the fraud, were there any: whence we may conclude, *a fortiori*, that they must have enabled the persons who were upon the spot, when the books were published, to do this; and the importance of many of these particulars considered under *Prop. 21.* would furnish them with abundant motives for this purpose. And upon the whole I infer, that the very great number of particulars of time, place, persons, &c. mentioned in the scriptures, is a proof of their genuineness and truth, even previously to the consideration of the agreement of these particulars with history, natural and civil, and with one another, of which I now proceed to treat.

#### P R O P. XXIV.

*The Agreement of the Scriptures with History, natural and civil, is a Proof of their Genuineness and Truth.*

THUS the history of the fall agrees in an eminent manner, both with the obvious facts of labour, sorrow, pain, and death, with what we see and feel every day, and with all our philosophical inquiries into the frame of the human mind, the nature of social life, and the origin of evil, as may appear from these papers amongst other writings of the same kind. The several powers of the little world within a man's own breast are at variance with one another, as well as those of the great world; we are utterly  
unable

unable to give a complete solution of the origin of the evils which flow from these discords, and from the jarring of the elements of the natural world; and yet there are comfortable hopes, that all evil will be overpowered and annihilated at last, and that it has an entire subserviency to good really and ultimately; *i. e.* though the *serpent bruise our heel*, yet we shall *bruise its head*.

It cannot be denied indeed, but that both the history of the creation, and that of the fall, are attended with great difficulties. But then they are not of such a kind as intimate them to be a fiction contrived by *Moses*. It is probable, that he set down the traditional account, such as he received it from his ancestors; and that this account contains the literal truth in short, though so concealed in certain particulars through its shortness, and some figurative expressions made use of, that we cannot yet, perhaps never shall, interpret it satisfactorily. However, Mr. *Whiston's* conjectures concerning the six days creation seem to deserve the attention of future inquirers; and there is great plausibility in supposing with him, that the first chapter of *Genesis* contains a narrative of the succession of visible appearances.

One may suppose also, that there is a typical and prophetic sense to be discovered hereafter, relative perhaps to the six millenniums, which are to precede a seventh sabbatical one; and that the words are more accommodated to this sense than to the literal one, in some places, which I think holds in many of the prophecies that have double senses. However, there is no appearance of any motive to a fraud, either in the history of the creation or fall, nor any mark of one. And the same shortness and obscurity which prevents our being able to explain, seems also to preclude objections. If we suppose these histories to have been delivered by traditional explanations that accompanied hieroglyphical delineations, this would perhaps account



count for some of the difficulties; and help us to conceive how the histories may be exact, and even decypherable hereafter. The appellations of the tree of life, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and of the serpent, seem to favour this supposition. At the utmost, one can make no objections against these histories, but what are consistent with the first and lowest of the suppositions above-mentioned concerning divine inspiration.

Natural history bears a strong testimony to *Moses's* account of the deluge; and shews that it must have been universal, or nearly so, however difficult it may be to us, either to find sources for so great a body of waters, or methods of removing them. That a comet had some share in this event, seems highly probable from what Dr. *Halley* and Mr. *Whiston* have observed of this matter: I guess also partly from the supposition, that some part of the tail of a comet was then attracted by the earth, and deposited there, partly from the great shortening of human life after the flood, and partly from the fermenting and inebriating quality of vegetable juices, which seems first to have appeared immediately after the flood, that a great change was made at the time of the flood in the constitution of natural bodies, and particularly in that of water. And it seems not improbable to me, that an enlargement of the respective spheres of attraction and repulsion, and of the force of these, in the small particles of water, might greatly contribute to account for some circumstances of the deluge, mentioned by *Moses*. For, by the increase of the sphere, and force of attraction, the waters suspended in the air or firmament in the form of a mist or vapour before the flood, see *Gen. ii. 5, 6.* might be collected into large drops, and fall upon the earth. And their fall might give occasion to rarer watery vapours, floating at great distances from the earth in the planetary and intermundane spaces, to approach it, be in  
like

like manner condensed into large drops, and fall upon it. This might continue for forty days, the force with which the rare vapours approached the earth decreasing all the latter part of that time, and being at the end of it overpowered by the contrary force of the vapours raised from the earth, now covered with water, by the action of the sun, and of the wind, mentioned *Gen. viii. 1*. For it is evident, that the wind has great power in raising watery particles, *i. e.* putting them into a state of repulsion; and the wind here considered would be far stronger than that which now prevails in the *pacific ocean*, since the whole globe was one great ocean during the height of the deluge. The cessation of the rain, and the increase of the sphere, and force of repulsion, above supposed, would in like manner favour the ascent of vapours from this great ocean. And thus the precedent vapours might be driven by the subsequent ones into the planetary and intermundane spaces, beyond the earth's attraction. However, since the quantity of the subsequent vapours must perpetually decrease by the decrease of the surface of the ocean, a limit would be set to the ascent of the vapours, as was before to their descent.

According to this hypothesis, that state of our waters, which was superinduced at the deluge, may both be the cause of the rainbow, *i. e.* of drops of a size proper for this purpose, and exempt us from the danger of a second deluge. For a fresh intermixture of like cometical particles could not now superinduce a new state. The rainbow may therefore be a natural sign and evidence, *that the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy the earth.*

As to the breaking up the fountains of the great deep, mentioned *Gen. vii. 11*. though no satisfactory account has been given of this hitherto, yet surely there is great plausibility in supposing, that the increased attraction of a comet, consequent upon its near approach

approach to the earth, might have some such effect, and at the same time contribute to produce such changes in the earth, as a mere deluge could not.

Civil history affords likewise many evidences, which support the *Mosaic* account of the deluge. Thus, first, we find from pagan authors, that the tradition of a flood was general, or even universal. Secondly, The paucity of mankind, and the vast tracts of uninhabited land, which are mentioned in the accounts of the first ages, shew that mankind are lately sprung from a small stock, and even suit the time assigned by *Moses* for the flood. Thirdly, The great number of small kingdoms, and petty states, in the first ages, and the late rise of the great empires of *Egypt*, *Assyria*, *Babylon*, &c. concur to the same purpose. Fourthly, The invention and progress of arts and sciences concur likewise. And this last favours the *Mosaic* history of the antediluvians. For as he mentions little of their arts, so it appears from the late invention of them after the flood, that those who were preserved from it were possessed of few.

It has been objected to the *Mosaic* history of the deluge, that the ark could not contain all the animals which are now found upon the earth with the proper provisions for them during the time of the deluge. But this, upon an accurate computation, has been proved to be otherwise; so that what was thought an objection, is even some evidence. For it is extremely improbable, that a person who had feigned the particular of the ark, should have come so near the proper dimensions. It is to be considered here, that the several specieses of both plants, and brute animals, which differ from each other by small degrees, seem to be multiplied every day, by the varieties of climates, culture, diet, mixture, &c. also, that if we suppose an universal deluge, the ark, with the entrance of the animals, &c. seem necessary also. For as we can trace up the first im-  
perfect

perfect rudiments of the art of shipping amongst the *Greeks*, there could be no shipping before the flood; consequently no animals could be saved. Nay, it is highly improbable, that even men, and domestic animals, could be saved, not to mention wild beasts, serpents, &c. though we should suppose, that the antediluvians had shipping, unless we suppose also, that they had a divine intimation and directions about it, such as *Moses* relates; which would be to give up the cause of infidelity at once.

It has been objected likewise, that the *Negro* nations differ so much from the *Europeans*, that they do not seem to have descended from the same ancestors. But this objection has no solid foundation. We cannot presume to say what alterations climate, air, water, soil, customs, &c. can or cannot produce. It is no ways to be imagined, that all the national differences in complexion, features, make of the bones, &c. require so many different originals; on the contrary, we have reason from experience to assert, that various changes of this kind are made by the incidents of life, just as was observed, in the last paragraph, of plants, and brute animals. And, with respect to the different complexions of different nations, Dr. *Mitchell* has shewn with great appearance of truth, *Phil. Trans. Numb. 474.* that these arise from external influences. It will confirm this, if it be found, that the *Jews*, by residing in any country for some generations, approach to the complexion of the original natives. At the same time we must observe from the history of distempers, that acquired dispositions may be transmitted to the descendants for some generations; which is perhaps one of the great truths intimated in the account of the fall. And thus the children of *Negroes* may be black, though born and bred up in a country where the original natives are not so.

A third



A third objection is, that it is difficult to account for the original of the *Americans*, and for the wild beasts and serpents that are found in that quarter of the world, according to the *Mosaic* history. But to this one may answer, first, that *America* may be even now contiguous to the north-east part of *Asia*. Secondly, That it might have been contiguous to other parts of our great continent for some centuries after the deluge, though that contiguity be since broken off. Thirdly, That the first sailors, who ventured out of the straits, or others, might be driven, by stress of weather, and their own ignorance, first within the influence of the trade-winds, and then to some part of *America*. One can offer nothing certain on either side, in respect of these points. However, it seems to me, that many customs found amongst the *Negroes* and *Americans* are stronger evidences, that they are of the same original with the *Asiatics* and *Europeans*, than any which have yet appeared to the contrary. And, upon the whole, I conclude certainly, that the *Mosaic* account of the deluge is much confirmed by both natural and civil history, if we embrace the first and lowest hypothesis concerning divine inspiration; and has very strong presumptions for it, according to the second or third.

If we could suppose the high mountains in *South-America* not to have been immersed in the deluge, we might the more easily account for the wild beasts, poisonous serpents, and curious birds of *America*. Might not the ark be driven round the globe during the deluge? And might not *Noah* be aware of this, and observe that it had been immersed fifteen cubits in water? And may not the *Mosaic* account be partly a narrative of what *Noah* saw, partly the conclusions which he must naturally draw from thence? Thus the tops of some of the highest mountains might escape, consistently with the *Mosaic* account. The future inquiries of natural historians may perhaps determine this point. The

The next great event recorded in *Genesis* is the confusion of languages. Now the *Mosaic* account of this appears highly probable, if we first allow that of the deluge. For it seems impossible to explain how the known languages should arise from one stock. Let any one try only in *Hebrew*, *Greek*, *Latin*, and *English*. The changes which have happened in languages since history has been certain, do not at all correspond to a supposition of this kind. There is too much of method and art in the *Greek* and *Latin* tongues for them to have been the inventions of a rude and barbarous people; and they differ too much from *Hebrew*, *Arabic*, &c. to have flowed from them without design. As to the *Chinese*, it is difficult to make any probable conjectures about it, partly from its great heterogeneity in respect of other languages, partly because learned men have not yet examined it accurately. However, the most probable conjecture seems to be, that it is the language of *Noah's* post-diluvian posterity; the least probable one, that it could have flowed naturally from any known language, or from the same stock with any; which it must have done, if we admit the deluge, and yet reject the confusion of languages.

The dispersion of the three sons of *Noah* into different countries, related in the tenth chapter of *Genesis*, comes next under consideration, being a consequence, not the cause, of the diversity of languages. Now here antiquarians and learned men, seem to be fully agreed, that the *Mosaic* account is confirmed as much as can be expected in our present ignorance of the state of ancient nations. And it is to be observed of all the articles treated of under this proposition, that we, who live in the North-west corner of *Europe*, lie under great disadvantages in such researches. However, since those who have studied the oriental languages and histories, or have travelled into the eastern parts, have made many discoveries

discoveries of late years, which have surprizingly confirmed the scripture accounts, one may hope and presume, that if either our learned men be hereafter suffered to have free access to those parts, or the natives themselves become learned, both which are surely probable in the highest degree, numberless unexpected evidences for the truth of the scripture history will be brought to light.

Let us next come to the state of religion in the ancient postdiluvian world, according to *Moses*, and the succeeding sacred historians. The postdiluvian patriarchs then appear to have worshipped the one Supreme Being by sacrifices, but in a simple manner, and to have had frequent divine communications. By degrees their posterity fell off to idolatry, worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, deified dead men, and polluted themselves with the most impure and abominable institutions. The *Israelites* alone were kept to the worship of the true God, and even they were often infected by their idolatrous neighbours. Now all this is perfectly agreeable to what we find in pagan history. The idolatries of the pagans are acknowledged on all hands. It appears also from pagan history, that they grew up by degrees, as the scriptures intimate. All the pagan religions appear to have had the worship of one god superior to the rest, as their common foundation. They all endeavoured to render him propitious by sacrifice; which surely cannot be an human invention, nor a custom, which, if invented in one nation, would be readily propagated to another. They all joined mediatorial and inferior, also local and tutelar deities to the one god. And they all taught the frequency of divine communications. Hence the pagan religions appear to be merely the degenerated offspring of patriarchal revelations, and to infer them as their cause. Hence the pretences of kings, lawgivers, priests, and great men, to inspiration, with the credulity of the multitude.

titude. That there had been divine communications, was beyond dispute; and therefore all that reluctance to admit them, which appears in the present age, was over-ruled. At first there were no impostors. When therefore they did arise, it would not be easy for the multitude to distinguish between those who had really divine communications, and those who only pretended to them; till at last all real inspiration having ceased amongst the gentile world, their several religions kept possession merely by the force of education, fraud in the priests, and fear in the people; and even these supports began to fail at last, about the time of Christ's coming. And thus many things, which have been thought to weaken the evidences for the scripture accounts, are found to strengthen them, by flowing naturally from that state of religion in ancient times, and from that only, which the scripture delivers.

A farther confirmation of the same scripture accounts of the flood, dispersion of mankind, and patriarchal revelations, may be had from the following very remarkable particular: it appears from history, that the different nations of the world have had, *cæteris paribus*, more or less knowledge, civil and religious, in proportion as they were nearer to, or had more intimate communication with, *Egypt, Palestine, Chaldaea*, and the other countries, that were inhabited by the most eminent persons amongst the first descendents of *Noah*, and by those who are said in scripture to have had particular revelations made to them by God; and that the first inhabitants of the extreme parts of the world, reckoning *Palestine* as the centre, were in general mere savages. Now all this is utterly inexplicable upon the footing of infidelity, of the exclusion of all divine communications. Why should not human nature be as sagacious, and make as many discoveries, civil and religious, at the Cape of Good Hope, or in *America*, as in *Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Greece, or Rome*? Nay, why should *Palestine*



so far exceed them all, as it did confessedly? Allow the scripture accounts, and all will be clear and easy. Mankind, after the flood, were first dispersed from the plains of *Mesopotamia*. Some of the chief heads of families settled there, in *Palæstine*, and in *Egypt*. *Palæstine* had afterwards extraordinary divine illuminations bestowed upon its inhabitants, the *Israelites* and *Jews*. Hence its inhabitants had the purest notions of God, and the wisest civil establishment. Next after them come the *Egyptians* and *Chaldeans*, who, not being removed from their first habitations, and living in fertile countries watered by the *Nile*, *Tigris*, and *Euphrates*, may be supposed to have preserved more both of the antediluvian and postdiluvian revelations, also to have had more leisure for invention, and a more free communication with the *Israelites* and *Jews*, than any other nations: whereas those small parties, which were driven farther and farther from each other into the extremes of heat and cold, entirely occupied in providing necessaries for themselves, and also cut off by rivers, mountains, or distance, from all communication with *Palæstine*, *Egypt*, and *Chaldæa*, would lose much of their original stock, and have neither inclination nor ability to invent more.

Let us now consider the history of particular facts, and inquire what attestations we can produce from pagan history for the scripture accounts of *Abraham* and his posterity the *Israelites* and *Jews*. We cannot expect much here, partly because these things are of a private nature, if compared to the universal deluge, partly because the pagan history is either deficient, or grossly corrupted with fable and fiction, till we come to the times of the declension of the kingdoms of *Israel* and *Judah*. However, some faint traces there are in ancient times, and many concurring circumstances in succeeding ones; and, as soon as the pagan records come to be clear and certain,  
we

we have numerous and strong confirmations of the sacred history. Thus the history of *Abraham* seems to have transpired in some measure. It is also probable, that the ancient *Brachmans* were of his posterity by *Keturah*, that they derived their name from him, and worshipped the true God only. *Moses* is mentioned by many heathen writers, and the accounts which they give of his conducting the *Israelites* from *Egypt* to *Canaan* are such as might be expected. The authors lived so long after *Moses*, and had so little opportunity or inclination to know the exact truth, or to be particular, that their accounts cannot invalidate the scripture history, though they do a little confirm it. The expulsion of the *Canaanites* by *Joshua* seems to have laid the foundation of the kingdom of the *shepherds* in the *Lower Egypt* mentioned by *Manetho*, and of the expulsion of the natives into the *Upper Egypt*; who, after some centuries, drove the *shepherds* back again into *Canaan* about the time of *Saul*. The *Canaanites* mentioned by *St. Austin* and others, upon the coast of *Afric*, may be of the same original. See *Newton's Chronol.* page 198. We may conclude from the book of *Judges*, that there were many petty sovereignties in the neighbourhood of *Canaan*; and it appears from pagan history, as *Sir Isaac Newton* has rectified it, that the first great empire, that of *Egypt*, was not yet risen. When *David* subdued the *Philistines* or *Phœnicians*, *Cadmus* and others seem to have fled into *Greece*, and to have carried letters with them, which the *Philistines* had probably learnt, about a generation before, from the copy of the law found in the ark taken from the *Israelites*. After *Solomon's* temple was built, the temple of *Vulcan* in *Egypt*, and others in other places, began to be built in imitation of it; just as the oracles of the heathens were imitations of God's communications to the *Israelites*, and particularly of that by *Urim* and *Thummim*. *Shishak*, who came out of *Egypt* in the fifth year

of *Rehoboam*, is the *Sesostris* of *Herodotus*; and this point, being settled, becomes a capital pin, upon which all the pagan chronology depends. Hence *Herodotus*'s list of the *Egyptian* kings is made probable and consistent. As we advance farther to the *Affyrian* monarchy, the scripture accounts agree with the profane ones rectified; and when we come still farther to the æra of *Nabonassar*, and to the kings of *Babylon* and *Persia*, which are posterior to this æra, and recorded in *Ptolemy*'s canon, we find the agreement of sacred and profane history much more exact, there being certain criterions in the profane history for fixing the facts related in it. And it is remarkable, that not only the direct relations of the historical books, but the indirect incidental mention of things in the prophecies, tallies with true chronology; which surely is such an evidence for their genuineness and truth, as cannot be called in question. And, upon the whole, it may be observed, that the sacred history is distinct, methodical and consistent throughout; the profane utterly deficient in the first ages, obscure, and full of fictions, in the succeeding ones; and that it is but just clear and precise in the principal facts about the time that the sacred history ends. So that this corrects and regulates that, and renders it intelligible in many instances, which must otherwise be given up as utterly inexplicable. How then can we suppose the sacred history not to be genuine and true, or a wicked imposture to rise up, and continue not only undiscovered, but even to increase to a most audacious height, in a nation which of all others kept the most exact accounts of time? I will add one remark more: this same nation, who may not have lost so much as one year, from the creation of the world to the *Babylonish* captivity, as soon as they were deprived of the assistance of prophets, became most inaccurate in their methods of keeping time, there being nothing more

erroneous

erroneous than the accounts of *Josephus*, and the modern *Jews*, from the time of *Cyrus*, to that of *Alexander the Great*; notwithstanding that all the requisite assistances might easily have been borrowed from the neighbouring nations, who now kept regular annals. Hence it appears, that the exactness of the sacred history was owing to the divine assistance.

It is an evidence in favour of the scriptures, allied to those which I am here considering, that the manners of the persons mentioned in the scriptures have that simplicity and plainness, which is also ascribed to the first ages of the world by pagan writers; and both of them concur, by this, to intimate the novelty of the then present race, *i. e.* the deluge.

Besides these attestations from profane history, we may consider the *Jews* themselves as bearing testimony to this day, in all countries of the world, to the truth of their ancient history, *i. e.* to that of the Old and New Testaments. Allow this, and it will be easy to see how they should still persist in their attachment to that religion, those laws, and those prophecies, which so manifestly condemn them, both in past times, and in the present. Suppose any considerable alteration made in their ancient history, *i. e.* any such as may answer the purposes of infidelity, and their present state will be inexplicable.

The books of the New Testament are verified by history, in a manner still more illustrious; these books being written, and the facts mentioned therein transacted, during the times of *Augustus*, *Tiberius*, and the succeeding *Cæsars*. Here we may observe,

First, That the incidental mention of the *Roman* emperors, governors of *Judæa*, and the neighbouring provinces, the *Jewish* high priests, sects of the *Jews*, and their customs, of places, and of transactions, is found to be perfectly agreeable to the histories of those times. And as the whole number of



these particulars is very great, they may be reckoned a full proof of the genuineness of the books of the New Testament; it being impossible for a person who had forged them, *i. e.* who was not an eye and ear witness, and otherwise concerned with the transactions as the books require, but who had invented many histories and circumstances, &c. not to have been deficient, superfluous, and erroneous. No man's memory or knowledge is sufficient for such an adaptation of feigned circumstances, and especially where the mention is incidental. Let any one consider how often the best poets fail in this, who yet endeavour not to vary from the manners and customs of the age of which they write; at the same time that poetry neither requires nor admits so great a minuteness in the particular circumstances of time, place, and persons, as the writers of the New Testament have descended to naturally and incidentally.

Secondly, That Christ preached in *Judea* and *Galilee*, made many disciples, and was crucified under *Pontius Pilate*, at the instigation of the chief men among the *Jews*; also that his disciples preached after his death, not only in *Judea*, but all over the *Roman* empire; that they converted multitudes, were persecuted, and at last suffered death for their firm adherence to their master; and that both *Christ* and his disciples pretended to work many miracles; are facts attested by civil history in the amplest manner, and which cannot be called in question. Now these facts are so connected with the other facts mentioned in the New Testament, that they must stand or fall together. There is no probable account to be given of these facts, but by allowing the rest. For the proof of this, I appeal to every reader who will make the trial. It may also be concluded from the remarkable unwillingness of the present unbelievers to allow even the plainest facts in express terms. For it shews them to be apprehensive, that the connection between the

the several principal facts mentioned in the New Testament is inseparable, and that the attestation given to some by civil history may easily be extended to all.

It has been objected, that more mention ought to have been made of the common facts by the profane writers of those times, also some acknowledgment of the miraculous ones, had they been true. To this we may answer, First, That *Judæa* was but a small and distant province of the *Roman* empire, and the *Jews* themselves, with whom the Christians were for a long time confounded, much despised by the *Romans*. Secondly, That historians, politicians, generals, &c. have their imaginations so much preoccupied by affairs of state, that matters purely religious are little regarded by them. *Gallio* cared for none of these things. Thirdly, That a person who attended in any great degree to the christian affairs, if a good man, could scarce avoid becoming a christian; after which his testimony ceases to be pagan, and becomes christian; of which I shall speak under the next head. Fourthly, That both those who were favourers of the christians, and those averse to them in a moderate degree, one of which must be the case with great numbers, would have motives to be silent; the half christians would be silent for fear of being persecuted; and the others would affect to take no notice of what they disliked, but could not disprove; which is a fact that occurs to daily observation. Lastly, When these things are laid together, the attestations of the profane writers to the common facts appear to be such as one might expect, and their silence as to the miraculous ones is accounted for.

Thirdly, All the christian writers, from the time of the apostles and downwards, bear testimony to the genuineness of the books of the New Testament, and the truth of the facts, in a great variety of ways, direct and indirect, and in such manner as might be

expected. Their quotations from them are numberless, and agree sufficiently with the present copies. They go every where upon the supposition of the facts, as the foundation of all their discourses, writings, hopes, fears, &c. They discover every where the highest regard, and even veneration, both for the books and the authors. In short, one cannot see how this testimony in favour of the books of the New Testament can be invalidated, unless by supposing all the ecclesiastical writing of the first centuries to be forged also; or all the writers to have concurred to write as if they believed the genuineness and truth of these books, though they did not; or to have had no ability or inclination to distinguish genuineness and truth from forgery and falsehood; or by some other such supposition, as will scarce bear to be named.

Here three questions may be asked, that bear some relation to this subject; and the answers to which will, I think, illustrate and confirm what has been advanced in the last paragraph.

Thus, First, It may be asked, why we have not more accounts of the life of Christ transmitted to us. To this I answer, that it is probable from St. *Luke's* preface, that there were many short and imperfect accounts handed about very early; the authors of which, though they had not taken care to inform themselves accurately, did not, however, endeavour to impose on others designedly; and that all these grew into disuse, of course, after the four gospels, or perhaps the three first, were published, or, at least, after the canon of the New Testament was formed; also that after this the christians were so perfectly satisfied, and had the four gospels in such esteem, that no one presumed to add any other accounts, and especially as all the apostles were then dead.

The Second Question is, how come we to have so little account in the primitive writers, of the lives, labours, and sufferings of the apostles? I answer, that

that the apostles seem to have resided in *Judea*, till *Nero's* army invaded it, and afterwards to have travelled into distant parts; and that neither their converts in *Judea*, nor those in the distant barbarous countries, into which they travelled, could have any probable motive for writing their lives: also, that, as to other christians, they had neither opportunities nor motives. The christians looked up to Christ, as their master, not to the apostles. Their great business was to promote christianity, not to gratify their own or other's fruitless curiosity. They were not learned men, who had spent their lives in the study of annals and biographers. They did not suspect that an account of the lives of the apostles would ever be wanted, or that any one could call their integrity, inspiration, miracles, &c. in question. *St. Luke* seems to have designed by his *Acts*, chiefly to shew how the gospel first got firm footing amongst *Jews*, proselytes of the gate, and idolatrous gentiles; in order to encourage the new converts to copy the examples of the apostles, and first preachers, and to publish the gospel in all nations. Lastly, The primitive christians had early disputes with *Jews*, heathens, heretics, and even with one another; which took up much of their attention and concern.

Thirdly, It may be asked, who were the persons that forged the spurious acts and revelations of several of the apostles, &c. I answer, that, amongst the number of those who joined themselves to the christians, there must be many whose hearts were not truly purified, and who, upon apostatizing, would become more self-interested, vain-glorious, and impure, than before. These were antichrists, as *St. John* calls them, who left the church because they were not of it. Some of these forged books to support themselves, and establish their own tenets. Others might write partly like enthusiasts, partly like impostors. And, lastly, There were some both weak  
and



and wicked men, though not so abandoned as the ancient heretics, who in the latter end of the second century, and afterwards, endeavoured to make converts by forgeries, and such other wicked arts. However, all those who are usually called fathers, in the first ages, stand remarkably clear of such charges.

Fourthly, The propagation of christianity, with the manner in which it was opposed by both Jews and Gentiles, bears witness to the truth and genuineness of the books of the New Testament. But I forbear entering upon this argument, as it will come more properly in another place. Let me only observe here, that there are many passages in the Talmudical writings, which afford both light and confirmation to the New Testament, notwithstanding that one principal design of the authors was to discredit it.

#### P R O P. XXV.

*The Agreement of the Books of the Old and New Testaments with themselves and with each other, is an Argument both of their Genuineness and Truth.*

THE truth of this proposition will be evident, if a sufficient number of these mutual agreements can be made out. It is never found, that any single person, who deviates much from the truth, can be so perfectly upon his guard as to be always consistent with himself. Much less therefore can this happen in the case of a number, living also in different ages. Nothing can make them consistent, but their copying faithfully after real facts. The instances will make this clearer.

The laws of the *Israelites* are contained in the Pentateuch, and referred to in a great variety of ways, direct and indirect, in the historical books, in the Psalms, and in the Prophecies. The historical facts

facts also in the preceding books are often referred to in those that succeed, and in the Psalms and Prophecies. In like manner the gospels have the greatest harmony with each other, and the Epistles of St. Paul with the *Acts of the Apostles*. And indeed one may say, that there is scarce any book of either Old or New Testament, which may not be shewn to refer to many of the rest in some way or other. For it is to be observed, that the Bible has been studied and commented upon far more than any other book whatsoever; and that it has been the business of believers in all ages to find out the mutual relations of its parts, and of unbelievers to search for inconsistencies; also that the first meet every day with more and more evidences in favour of the scriptures from the mutual agreements and coincidences here considered; and that unbelievers have never been able to allege any inconsistencies that could in the least invalidate the truth of the principal facts; I think, not even affect the divine inspiration of the historical books, according to the second or third hypothesis above-mentioned.

It will probably illustrate this proposition, to bring a parallel instance from the *Roman* writers. Suppose then that no more remained of these writers than *Livy*, *Tully*, and *Horace*. Would they not by their references to the same facts and customs, by the sameness of style in the same writer, and differences in the different ones, and numberless other such like circumstances of critical consideration, prove themselves, and one another to be genuine, and the principal facts related, or alluded to, to be true?

It is also to be observed, that this mutual harmony and self-consistency, in its ultimate ratio, is the whole of the evidence which we have for facts done in ancient times or distant places. Thus, if a person was so sceptical as to call in question the whole *Roman* history, even the most notorious facts, as their conquests

quests first of *Italy*, and then of the neighbouring countries, the death of *Cæsar*, and the fall of the western empire by the invasions of the *Goths* and *Vandals*, with all the evidences of these from books, inscriptions, coins, customs, &c. as being all forged in order to deceive; one could only shew him, that it is inconsistent with what he sees of human nature, to suppose that there should be such a combination to deceive; or that the agreement of these evidences with each other is far too great to be the effect of any such fraudulent design, of chance, &c. And all these arguments are, in effect, only bringing a number of concurring evidences, whose sum total soon approaches to the ultimate limit, *i. e.* to unity, or absolute certainty, nearer than by any distinguishable difference. It does not therefore import, in respect of real conviction, after a certain number are brought, whether we bring any more or no; they can only add this imperceptible defect, *i. e.* practically nothing. Thus I suppose, that the remaining writings of *Livy*, *Tully*, and *Horace* alone would satisfy any impartial man so much of the general extensiveness of the *Roman* conquests, &c. that nothing perceptible could be added to his conviction; no more than any common event can, or ever does in fact, appear more credible from the testimony of a thousand than of ten or twenty witnesses of approved integrity. And whoever will apply this reasoning to the present case, must perceive, as it appears to me, that the numberless minute, direct, and indirect agreements and coincidences, that present themselves to all diligent readers of the scriptures, prove their truth and genuineness beyond all contradiction, at least according to the first and lowest hypothesis concerning divine inspiration.

As to those few and small apparent inconsistencies, which are supposed to confine the inspiration of the scriptures to this lowest sense; one may observe, that they

they decrease every day as learned men inquire farther; and that, were the scriptures perfectly exact in every particular, there must be some apparent difficulties, arising merely from our ignorance of ancient languages, customs, distant places, &c. and consequently that if these be not more, than our ignorance makes it reasonable to expect, they are no objection at all. And of apparent inconsistencies one may remark in particular, that they exclude the supposition of forgery. No single forger, or combination of forgers, would have suffered the apparent inconsistencies which occur in a few places, such as the different genealogies of Christ in *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke*, and some little variations in the narration of the same fact in different gospels. These are too obvious at first sight not to have been prevented, had there been any fraud.

I will here add an hypothesis, by which, as it appears to me, one may reconcile the genealogies of *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke*. I suppose then, that *St. Matthew* relates the real progenitors of *Joseph*: *St. Luke* the series of those who were heirs to *David* by birthright; and that both transcribed from genealogical tables, well known to the *Jews* of those times. *St. Matthew* after *David* takes *Solomon*, from whom *Joseph* lineally descended. *St. Luke* takes *Nathan*, upon whom, though younger than some others, and even than *Solomon*, we must suppose the birthright to be conferred, as in the instances of *Jacob* and *Joseph*. *St. Matthew* proceeds by real descent to *Salathiel*, at the time of the captivity; *St. Luke* proceeds by the heirs according to birthright, and comes to *Salathiel* likewise. We must therefore suppose, that *Salathiel*, *Solomon's* heir, was now *David's* also, by the extinction of all the branches of *Nathan's* family. *St. Matthew* then takes *Zorobabel* as *Joseph's* real progenitor, *St. Luke* take him as heir or eldest son to *Salathiel*. Again, *St. Matthew* takes *Abiud* the real progenitor,



progenitor, *St. Luke Rhesa* the eldest son; and thus *St. Matthew* proceeds by lineal descent to *Joseph*, *St. Luke* by heirs to the same *Joseph*; for we are to suppose, that *Heli* dying without heirs male, *Joseph* become his heir by birthright, *i. e.* heir to *Zorobabel*, *i. e.* to *David*. If we farther suppose, that the virgin *Mary* was daughter to *Heli*, for which there appears to be some evidence, the solution will be more complete, and more agreeable to the *Jewish* customs. It confirms this solution, that *St. Matthew* uses the word *ἐγέννησε*, which restrains his genealogy to lineal descent; whereas *St. Luke* uses the article *τῷ*, which is very general. It confirms it also, that *St. Luke's* descents, reckoning from *David* to *Salathiel*, are but about twenty-two years apiece; which is much too short for descents from father to son, but agrees very well to descents by birthright. As to *St. Matthew's* descents, they are far too long, after the captivity, for descents from father to son; but then it is easy to suppose, that some were left out on account of dying before their fathers, or some other reason. Three of the kings of *Judah* are left out after *Joram*, perhaps on account of their being of the immediate posterity of the idolatrous *Ahab's* daughter *Athaliab*. Others are left out after the captivity, perhaps for some similar reason.

#### P R O P. XXVI.

*The Unity of Design, which appears in the Dispensations recorded in the Scriptures, is an Argument not only of their Truth and Genuineness, but also of their Divine Authority.*

FOR this unity is not only so great as to exclude forgery and fiction, in the same way as the mutual agreements mentioned in the last proposition, but also

also greater than the best and ablest men could have preserved, in the circumstances of these writers, without the divine assistance. In order to see this, let us inquire what this design is, and how it is pursued by the series of events, and divine interpositions, recorded in the scriptures.

The design is that of bringing all mankind to an exalted, pure, and spiritual happiness, by teaching, enforcing, and begetting in them love and obedience to God. This appears from many passages in the Old Testament, and from almost every part of the New. Now we are not here to inquire in what manner an almighty being could soonest and most effectually accomplish this. But the question is, whether, laying down the state of things as it has been, is, and probably will be, for our foundation, there be not a remarkable fitness in the dispensations ascribed to God in the scriptures, to produce this glorious effect: and whether the persons who administered these dispensations did not here concur with a surprizing uniformity, though none of them saw God's ultimate design completely, and some but very imperfectly; just as brutes by their instincts, and children by the workings of their natural faculties, contribute to their own preservation, improvement, and happiness without at all foreseeing, that they do this. If we alter any of the circumstances of the microcosm or macrocosm, of the frame of our own natures, or of the external world that surrounds us, we shall have question rise up after question in an endless series, and shall never be satisfied, unless God should be pleased to produce happiness instantaneously, *i. e.* without any means, or secondary instrumental causes, at all; and, even then, we should only be where we were at our first setting out, if things be considered in the true, ultimate light. We are therefore to lay down the real state of things, as our foundation, *i. e.* we are to suppose man to be in a state of good mixed

mixed with evil, born with appetites, and exposed to temptations, to which if he yields, suffering must follow; which suffering, however, tends to eradicate the disposition from whence it flowed, and to implant a better: we are to suppose him to be endued with voluntary powers, which enable him to model his affections and actions according to a rule; and that the love of God, his ultimate happiness, can never be genuine, but by his first learning to fear God, by his being mortified to pleasure, honour, and profit, and the most refined selfish desires, and by his loving his neighbour as himself, *i. e.* we must suppose all that which practical writers mean by a state of trial, temptation, moral exercise and improvement, and of practical free-will. Let us see therefore, how the several dispensations mentioned in the scriptures, their being recorded there, and the subordinate parts, which the prophets and apostles acted, conspired to bring about this ultimate end of man, both in each individual, and in the whole aggregate, considered as one great individual, as making up the mystical body of Christ, according to the language of *St. Paul*; and inquire, whether, if all other reasons were set aside, the mere harmony and concurrence of so many parts, and so many persons removed from each other by long intervals of time, in this one great design, will not compel us to acknowledge the genuineness, truth, and divine authority, of the scriptures.

The first thing which presents itself to us in the scriptures, is the history of the creation and fall. These are not to be accounted for, as was said above, being the foundation upon which we go. However, the recording them by *Moses*, as tradition began to grow weak and uncertain, has been of great use to all those, who have had them communicated by this means perfectly or imperfectly, *i. e.* to a great part of the world. This history impresses an awful and amiable sense of the Divine Being, our creator and judge;

judge; shews the heinousness of sin; and mortifies us to this world, by declaring that our passage through it must be attended with labour and sorrow. We find ourselves in this state; revealed religion did not bring us into it: nor is this state an objection to revealed religion, more than to natural: however, revealed religion goes a step higher than natural, and shews the immediate secondary cause, viz. the sin and wilful disobedience of our first parents. And when the account of paradise, of man's expulsion thence, and of the curse past upon him in the beginning of *Genesis*, are compared with the removal of this curse, of sorrow, crying, pain, and death, with the renovation of all things, and with man's restoration to the tree of life and paradise, and his admission into the new *Jerusalem* in the last chapters of the revelation, hope and fear quicken each other; and both conspire to purify the mind, and to advance the great design considered under this proposition.

How far the deluge was necessary, *ceteris manentibus*, for the purification of those who were destroyed by it, *i. e.* for accomplishing this great end in them, we cannot presume to say. It is sufficient, that there is no contrary presumption, that no methods consistent with the state of things in the ancient world were neglected, as far as we know, and that we are not in the least able to propose a better scheme. We leave these rebellious, unhappy people, now translated into another state, to the same kind Providence which attended them in this, and all whose punishments on this side the grave are for melioration. However, the evident footsteps of this in the world, and the clear tradition of it, which would continue for several ages, also the history of it delivered by *Moses*, have an unquestionable good tendency. Sinners, who reflect at all, cannot but be alarmed at so dreadful an instance of divine severity. Farther, if this history should open



to us a new relation, viz. that which we bear to the comets, this, compared with other parts of the scriptures, may give us hereafter such intimations concerning the kind, degree, and duration of future punishment, as will make the most obdurate tremble, and work in them that fear which is the beginning of wisdom, and of the perfect love which casteth out fear. At the same time we may observe, that the covenant which God made, not only with *Noah* and his posterity, but with all living creatures, after the flood, has a direct and immediate tendency to beget love.

The confusion of languages, the consequent dispersion of mankind, and the shortening of the lives of the postdiluvians, all concurred to check the exorbitant growth and infection of wickedness. And we may judge how necessary these checks were, *cæteris manentibus*, from the great idolatry and corruption which appeared in the world within less than a thousand years after the flood. The patriarchal revelations mentioned and intimated by *Moses* had the same good effects, and were the foundations of those pagan religions, and, in great measure, of that moral sense, which, corrupt and imperfect as they were, could not but be far preferable to an entire want of these. If it be objected, that, according to this, greater checks, and more divine communications, were wanted; I answer, that a greater dispersion, or shortening of human life, might have prevented the destined increase of mankind, or the growth of knowledge, civil and religious, &c. and that more or more evident divine interpositions might have restrained the voluntary powers too much, or have precluded that faith which is necessary to our ultimate perfection. These are conjectures indeed; but they are upon the level with the objection, which is conjectural also.

The next remarkable particular that occurs, is the calling of *Abraham*, the father of the faithful. Now  
in

in this part of the scripture history, as it is explained by the New Testament, we have the strongest evidences of God's great design to purify and perfect mankind. He is called to forsake his relations, friends and country, lest he should be corrupted by idolatry; he receives the promise of the land of *Canaan*, without seeing any probable means of obtaining it, besides this promise, in order to wean him from the dependence on external means; he waits for a son till all natural expectations ceased, for the same purpose; by obtaining him he learns to trust in God notwithstanding apparent impossibilities; and the command to sacrifice *his son, his only son Isaac, whom he loved*, affords him a noble opportunity of exercising this trust, and of shewing, that his principle of obedience to God was already superior to the purest of earthly affections. Lastly, when God promises him, as a reward for all his faith and obedience, as the highest blessing, that *in him and his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*, we must conceive this to be a declaration, first, that God himself is infinitely benevolent; and, secondly, that the happiness of *Abraham*, of his seed, and of all mankind who were to be blessed in his seed, must arise from their imitation of God in his benevolence. This whole universe is therefore a system of benevolence, or, as *St. Paul* expresses it, a body, which, being *fitly framed and compacted together, increaseth itself in love*.

As to the objection which is sometimes made to the sacrifice of *Isaac*, we may observe, that *Abraham* had himself received so many divine communications, and had been acquainted with so many made to his ancestors, that he had no doubt about the commands coming from God, did not even ask himself the question. It is probable, that in that early age there had as yet been few or no false pretences, or illusions. *Abraham* could as little doubt of God's right to *Isaac's* life, or of his care of him in

another state. These things were parts of the patriarchal religion. And yet great faith was required in *Abraham*, before he could overcome his natural affection and tenderness for *Isaac* out of a principle of obedience to God, and trust God for the accomplishment of his promise, though he commanded him to destroy the only apparent means of accomplishing it. Unless *Abraham* had been highly advanced in faith and obedience, he could not have stood so severe a trial; but this trial would greatly confirm these. And thus this history is so far from being liable to objection, that it is peculiarly conformable to those methods, which mere reason and experience dictate as the proper ones, for advancing and perfecting true religion in the soul. When the typical nature of it is also considered, one cannot surely doubt of its divine authority. And, in the previous steps, through which *Abraham* passed in order to obtain this blessing, we have an adumbration and example of that faith, patience, and gradual progress in the spiritual life, which are necessary to all those who hope to be *blest with faithful Abraham*.

Let us next pass on to *Moses*, and the *Israelites* under his conduct. Here we enter upon the consideration of that people, who are the type of mankind in general, and of each individual in particular; who were the keepers of the oracles of God, and who, under God, agreeably to his promise to *Abraham*, have been, and will hereafter be a blessing to all nations, and the means of restoring man to his paradisiacal state. And first they are oppressed with a cruel slavery in *Egypt*, left, being delighted with its fertility, and the present pleasures of sense which it afforded, they should forget their true earthly country, *the land of promise*. They then see the most amazing judgments inflicted upon their enemies the *Egyptians* by God, whilst they themselves were protected and delivered, that so they might learn confidence in his power and favour, and  
be

be thus prepared for their institution in religion, and their trial and purification in the wilderness. And here the awful delivery of the law, their being fed from day to day by miracle, their being kept from all commerce with other nations, and from all cares of this world in building, planting, &c. till their old habits, and *Egyptian* customs and idolatries, were quite effaced, and the practice of the new law established, their having the history of the world, and particularly of their ancestors, laid before them in one view, their tabernacle, their numerous rites and ceremonies, additional to those of the patriarchal religion, and opposite to the growing idolatries of their neighbours the *Egyptians* and *Canaanites*, and which, besides their uses as types, were memorials of their relation to God, and of his constant presence and protection, and, lastly, the total extinction of that murmuring generation, who longed for the flesh-pots of *Egypt*, cannot but appear to be intended for the purification of this chosen people, as being remarkably analogous to the methods of purification, which every good man experiences in himself, and sees in others, *i. e.* cannot but appear highly conducive to the great design considered under this proposition. At last, the education and instruction of this people being finished, they are admitted to inherit the earthly promise made to their forefathers, and take possession of the land of *Canaan* under *Joshua*. And thus we come to a remarkable period in God's dispensations to them.

Now therefore they are, in some measure, left to themselves, for the sake of moral improvement, the divine interpositions being far less frequent and solemn, than at the first erection of the theocracy under *Moses's* administration. However, there were many supernatural interpositions, appointments, favours, corrections, &c. from *Joshua* to *Malachi*, on account of their yet infant state in respect of internal purity,



whose tendency to improve both the body politic of the nation, and each individual, is sufficiently evident. After *Malachi* they were entirely left to themselves; their canon being completed, they were then only to hear and digest what *Moses* and the prophets had delivered unto them; and by this means to prepare themselves for the last and completest dispensation.

But, before we enter upon this, let us briefly consider the state of the gentile world, in the interval between *Abraham* and Christ, and what intimations the Old Testament gives us of their being also under the care of Providence, and in a state of moral discipline. They had then, according to this, First, the traditions of patriarchal revelations. Secondly, All the nations in the neighbourhood of *Canaan* had frequent opportunities and motives to inform themselves of the true religion. Thirdly, All those who conquered them at any time could not but learn something both from their subjection, and their deliverance afterwards. Fourthly, The captivities by *Salmaneser* and *Nebuchadnezzar* carried the knowledge of the true God to many distant nations. Lastly, The distractions of the *Jewish* state during the cotemporary empires of *Syria* and *Egypt*, the rise of the *Samaritan* religion, and the translation of the Old Testament into *Greek*, conduced eminently to the same purpose. And as it is necessary in the present state of things, for the exercise of various affections, and our moral improvement, that there should be degrees and subordinations in common things, so it seems equally necessary, that it should be so in religious matters: and thus the Gentiles may have had, in the interval between *Abraham* and Christ, all that suited their other circumstances, all that they could have improved by internal voluntary purity, other things remaining the same, which is always supposed. And it is remarkable in the view of this proposition, that we learn so  
much

much from the scriptures concerning the moral discipline which God afforded to the *Gentiles*.

When we come to the New Testament, the great design of all God's dispensations appears in a still more conspicuous manner. Here we see how Christ began to erect his spiritual kingdom, and the apostles extended it; we have the sublimest doctrines, and purest precepts, for effecting it in ourselves and others, and the strongest assurances, that it will be effected at last, that this leaven will continue to operate till the whole lump be leavened. But, above all, it is remarkable, that the principal means for effecting this is by submission and sufferance, not resistance, and external violence. The preachers are to undergo shame, persecution, and death, as the Lord of life and glory did before them. This is that *foolishness of God*, which is *wiser than men*, and that *weakness of God*, which is *stronger than men*. These means seem foolish and weak to the false wisdom of this world. But if they be compared with the frame of our natures, and with the real constitution of things, they will appear to be perfectly suited to produce in all mankind that best of ends, the annihilation of self, and worldly desires, and the pure and perfect love of God, and of all his creatures, in and through him.

Setting aside therefore the greatness of this end, and its suitableness to the divine goodness, setting aside also the miracles which have concurred in it, I say that the coincidence of the histories, precepts, promises, threatenings, and prophecies of the scriptures in this one point is an argument not only of their genuineness and truth, but of their divine authority. Had the writers been guided by their own spirits, and not by the supernatural influences of the spirit of truth, they could neither have opened to us the various dispensations of God tending to this one point, nor have pursued it themselves, with such entire steadiness

and uniformity, through so many different ages of the world.

The gradual opening of this design is an argument to the same purpose. Man's wisdom, if it could have formed such a design, would have rushed forward upon it prematurely. At the same time we may observe, that this design is implied in the scriptures from the first, though not expressed so as to be then understood; which is another argument of their divine original.

COR. From the reasoning used under this proposition we may be led to believe, that all the great events which happen in the world, have the same use as the dispensations, recorded in the scriptures, viz. that of being a course of moral discipline for nations and individuals, and of preparing the world for future dispensations. Thus the irruption of the barbarous nations into the *Roman* empire, the *Mahometan* imposture, the corruptions of the christian religion, the ignorance and darkness which reigned for some centuries during the grossest of these corruptions, the reformation, restoration of letters, and the invention of printing, three great cotemporary events which succeeded the dark times, the rise of the enthusiastical sects since the reformation, the vast increase and diffusion of learning in the present times, the growing extensiveness of commerce between various nations, the great prevalence of infidelity amongst both *Jews* and *Christians*, the dispersion of *Jews* and *Jesuits* into all known parts of the world, &c. &c. are all events, which, however mischievous some of them may seem to human wisdom, are, *cæteris manentibus*, the most proper and effectual way of hastening the kingdom of Christ, and the renovation of all things.

## P R O P. XXVII.

*Divine Communications, Miracles, and Prophecies, are agreeable to Natural Religion, and even seem necessary in the Infancy of the World.*

SINCE God is a being of infinite justice, mercy, and bounty, according to natural religion, it is reasonable to expect, that if the deficiencies of natural reason, or the inattention of mankind to the footsteps of his providence, were such at any time, as that all the world were in danger of being lost in ignorance, irreligion, and idolatry, God should interpose by extraordinary instruction, by alarming instances of judgment and mercy, and by prophetic declarations of things to come, in order to teach men his power, his justice, and his goodness, by sensible proofs and manifestations. We must not say here, that God could not suffer this; but inquire from history, whether he has or no. Now I suppose it will easily be acknowledged, that this was the case with the gentile world in ancient times, and that the *Judaical* and *Christian* institutions have greatly checked irreligion and idolatry, and advanced true natural religion; which is a remarkable coincidence in favour of these institutions, though all other evidences for them were set aside. Neither must we say here, that since God permits gross ignorance in some nations, the *Hottentots* for instance, even to this day, he might have permitted it in all mankind. Allow that we know so little of his unsearchable judgments, as not to be able to make any certain conclusion: yet surely it is much more agreeable to the forenamed attributes, and to the analogies of other things, that the bulk of mankind should have such a knowledge of God, as suits their intellectual faculties, and  
other



other circumstances, and carries them forwards in moral improvement, than that all should stand still, or go backwards, or make less improvement in religion, than tallies with their improvements in other things; also that there should be a subordination in religious advantages, rather than a perfect equality.

Natural religion also teaches us to consider God as our governor, judge, and father. Now all these superiors have two ways of administration, instruction and providence for the well-being of their inferiors, ordinary and extraordinary. It is therefore natural to expect upon great occasions an extraordinary interposition by revelation, miracle, and prophecy; and that especially in that infancy of the world after the deluge, which both sacred and profane history assure us of; inasmuch as both states and individuals require much more of the extraordinary interposition of governors and parents in their infancy, than afterwards: all which has a remarkable correspondence with the history of revelation, as it is in fact. And the analogical presumptions for miracles, in this and the last paragraph, seem at least equal to any presumption we have, or can have, in this our state of ignorance of the whole of things, against them.

But there is another argument in favour of miraculous interpositions, which may be drawn from the foregoing theory of human nature. I take it for granted, that mankind have not been upon this earth from all eternity. Eternity neither suits an imperfect, finite race of beings, nor our habitation the earth. It cannot have revolved round the sun, as it does now from all eternity; it must have had such changes made in it from its own fabric and principles, from the shocks of comets, &c. in infinite time, as would be inconsistent with our survival. There was therefore a time when man was first placed upon  
the

the earth. In what state was he then placed? An infant, with his mind a blank, void of ideas, as children now are born? He would perish instantly, without a series of miracles to preserve, educate, and instruct him. Or if he be supposed an adult with a blank mind, *i. e.* without ideas, associations, and the voluntary powers of walking, handling, speaking, &c. the conclusion is the same; he must perish also, unless conducted by a miraculous interposition and guardianship. He must therefore have so much of knowledge, and of voluntary and secondarily automatic powers, amongst which speech must be reckoned as a principal one, impressed upon him in the way of instinct, as would be necessary for his own preservation, and that of his offspring; and this instinct is, to all intents and purposes, divine revelation, since he did not acquire it by natural means. It is also of the nature of prophecy; for it seems impossible for mankind to subsist upon the earth, as it now is, without some foreknowledge, and the consequent methods of providing for futurity, such, for instance, as brutes have, or even greater, since man, unprovided with manual arts, is peculiarly exposed to dangers, necessities, and hardships.

Let us next consider, how the first men are to be provided with the knowledge of God, and a moral sense: for it seems necessary, that they should be possessed of some degree of these; else the sensual and sensual desires would be so exorbitant, as to be inconsistent both with each man's own safety, and with that of his neighbour; as may be gathered from the accounts of savage nations, who yet are not entirely destitute of the knowledge of God, and the moral sense. Now, to deduce the existence and attributes of God, even in a very imperfect manner, from natural phænomena, requires, as it seems to me, far more knowledge and ratiocination, than men could have for many generations, from their natural powers; and

and that especially if we suppose language not to be inspired, but attained in a natural way. And it appears both from the foregoing account of the moral sense, and from common observation, that this requires much time, care, and cultivation, besides the previous knowledge of God, before it can be a match for the impetuosity of natural desires. We may conclude therefore, that the first men could not attain to that degree of the knowledge of God, and a moral sense, which was necessary for them, without divine inspiration.

There are several particulars in the *Mosaic* account of the creation, fall, and circumstances of the ancient world, which tally remarkably with the method of reasoning used here. Thus, man is at first placed in a paradise, where there was nothing noxious, and consequently where he would need less miraculous interposition in order to preserve him. He lives upon the fruits of the earth, which want no previous arts of preparing them, and which would strike him by their smells, and, after an instance or two, incite him to pluck and taste: whereas animal diet, besides its inconsistency with a state of pure innocence and happiness, requires art and preparation necessarily. There is only one man, and one woman, created, that so the occasions for exerting the social affections may not offer themselves in any great degree, before these affections are generated; but, on the contrary, the affections may grow naturally, as it were, out of the occasions. The nakedness, and want of shame, in our first parents, are concurring evidences of the absence of art, acquired affections, evil, &c. *i. e.* of a paradisiacal state. In this state they learnt to give names to the animal world, perhaps from the automatic and semivoluntary exertions of the organs of speech, which the sight of the creatures, or the sound of their several cries, would excite, having probably a sufficient stock of language  
for

for communication with God and for conversing with each other about their daily food, and other necessary things, given them by immediate instinct or inspiration. And thus they would be initiated, by naming the animals, into the practice of inventing, learning, and applying words. For the same reasons, we may suppose, that they learnt many other things, and particularly the habit of learning, during their abode in paradise. Nay, it may perhaps be, that this growth of acquired knowledge, with the pleasantness of it, might put them upon learning evil as well as good, and excite the forbidden curiosity. After the fall, we find God providing them with clothes, *Cain* banished from the presence of God, an argument that others were permitted to have recourse to this presence to ask counsel, &c. his posterity inventing arts for themselves, *Enoch* and *Noah* walking with God before the flood, and *Abraham* afterwards; all the antediluvian patriarchs long-lived, the postdiluvian long-lived also for some generations; amongst other reasons, that they might instruct posterity in religious and other important truths; and the divine interpositions continuing through the whole antediluvian world, and gradually withdrawn in the postdiluvian. And it seems to me, to say the least, a very difficult thing for any man, even at this day, to invent a more probable account of the first peopling of this earth, than that which *Moses* has given us.



## P R O P. XXVIII.

*The Objection made against the Miracles recorded in the Scriptures, from their being contrary to the Course of Nature, is of little or no Force.*

IT is alleged here by the objectors, that the course of nature is fixed and immutable; and that this is evinced by the concurrent testimony of all mankind in all ages; and consequently that the testimony of a few persons, who affirm the contrary, cannot be admitted; but is, *ipso facto*, invalidated by its opposing general, or even universal experience. Now to this I answer,

First, That we do not, by admitting the testimony of mankind concerning the descent of heavy bodies upon the surface of our earth, the common effects of heat and cold, &c. suppose that this invalidates the testimony of those who declare they have met with contrary appearances in certain cases. Each party testifies what they have seen; and why may not the evidence of both be true? It does not follow, because a thing has happened a thousand, or ten thousand times, that it never has failed, nor ever can fail. Nothing is more common or constant, than the effect of gravity in making all bodies upon the surface of our earth tend to its centre. Yet the rare extraordinary influences of magnetism and electricity can suspend this tendency. Now, before magnetism and electricity were discovered, and verified by a variety of concurrent facts, there would have been as much reason to disallow the evidence of their particular effects attested by eye-witnesses, as there is now to disallow the particular miracles recorded in the scriptures; and yet we see that such a disallowance would have been a hasty conclusion, would have

have been quite contrary to the true nature of things. And, in fact, whatever may be the case of a few persons, and particularly of those, who think that they have an interest in disproving revealed religion, the generality of mankind, learned and unlearned, philosophical and vulgar, in all ages, have had no such disposition to reject a thing well attested by witnesses of credit, because it was contrary to the general, or even universal, tenor of former observations. Now it is evident to considering persons, especially if they reflect upon the foregoing history of association, that the dispositions to assent and dissent are generated in the human mind from the sum total of the influences, which particular observations have had upon it. It follows therefore, since the bulk of mankind, of all ranks and orders, have been disposed to receive facts the most surprizing, and contrary to the general tenor, upon their being attested in a certain limited degree, that extraordinary facts are not, in a certain way of considering the thing, out of the tenor of nature, but agreeable to it; that here therefore, as well as in common facts, the stress is to be laid upon the credibility of the witnesses; and that to do otherwise is an argument either of some great singularity of mind, or of an undue bias.

Secondly, If it should be alleged by the objectors, that they do not mean, by the course of nature, that tenor of common observations which occurred to the first rude ages of the world, or even that tenor which is usually called so at present; but those more general laws of matter and motion, to which all the various phænomena of the world, even those which are apparently most contrary to one another, may be reduced; and that it is probable, that universal experience would concur to support the true laws of nature of this kind, were mankind sufficiently industrious and accurate in bringing together  
the

the facts, and drawing the conclusions from them, in which case, any deviations from the tenor of nature, thus supported and explained, would be far more improbable, than according to the supposition of the foregoing paragraph; we answer, that this objection is a mere conjecture. Since we do not yet know what these true laws of matter and motion are, we cannot presume to say whether all phænomena are reducible to them, or not. Modern philosophers have indeed made great advances in natural knowledge; however, we are still in our infant state, in respect of it, as much as former ages, if the whole of things be taken into consideration. And this objection allows and supposes it to be so. Since therefore it was the proper method for former ages, in order to make advances in real knowledge, to abide by the award of credible testimonies, however contrary these testimonies might appear to their then notions and analogies, so this is also the proper method for us.

If indeed we put the course of nature for that series of events, which follow each other in the order of cause and effect by the divine appointment, this would be an accurate and philosophical way of speaking; but then we must at once acknowledge, that we are so ignorant of what may be the divine purposes and appointments, of secret causes, and of the corresponding variety of events, that we can only appeal to the facts, to credible relations of what actually has been, in order to know what is agreeable to the course of nature thus explained. The scripture miracles may not be at all contrary to its fixedness and immutability. Nor can any objection lie against them, if we consider things in this light, from the present notions of philosophical men, *i. e.* from the course of nature, understood in a popular sense; since this falls so short of the true course of nature as here defined, *i. e.* as admitting the

the instrumentality of beings superior to us, men divinely inspired, good angels, evil spirits, and many other influences, of which our present philosophy can take no cognizance.

With respect to moral analogy, the case is somewhat different. If the moral attributes of God, and the general rules of his providence, be supposed to be established upon a sure footing, then a series of events, which should be contrary to these, would have a strong presumption against them. And yet it becomes us to be very diffident here also. God is infinite, and we finite: we may therefore, from seeing only a small portion, judge what we see to be different from what it is. However, revealed religion has no occasion in general for any such apology. Natural and revealed religion, the word and works of God, are in all principal things most wonderfully analogous; as has been sufficiently shewn by the advocates for revealed religion, and most especially by bishop *Butler* in his analogy. As far therefore as moral analogy carries weight, there is positive evidence for the scripture miracles. And our comprehension of natural analogy is so imperfect as scarce to afford any presumption against them; but leaves the evidence in their favour, of nearly the same strength as it would have had for other facts.

Thirdly, Let it be observed, that the evidences for the scripture miracles are so numerous, and, in other respects, so strong, as to be nearly equal to any evidences that can be brought for the most common facts. For it is very manifest, as has been observed before, that a great number of credible evidences make a sum total, that is equal to unity, or absolute certainty, as this has been considered in the foregoing part of this work, nearer than by any perceptible difference: and the greatest number can never arrive quite to unity. The evidence therefore for common facts cannot exceed that for the scripture



miracles by more than an imperceptible difference, if we estimate evidences according to the truest and most accurate manner. Hence the nearly equal evidences for each must establish each in nearly an equal degree, unless we suppose either some such inconsistency between them, as that, common facts being allowed, the scripture miracles must be absolutely rejected, or that there is some evidence against the scripture miracles, which may be put in competition with that for them; neither of which things can be said with any colour of reason.

Fourthly, This whole matter may be put in another, and perhaps a more natural, as well as a more philosophical light; and that especially if the foregoing account of the mind be allowed. Association, *i. e.* analogy, perfect and imperfect, is the only foundation upon which we in fact do, or can, or ought to assent; and consequently a dissonance from analogy, or a repugnancy thereto, is a necessary foundation for dissent. Now it happens sometimes, that the same thing is supported and impugned by different analogies; or, if we put repugnance to analogy as equivalent to miracle, that both a fact and its non-existence imply a miracle; or, since this cannot be, that that side alone, which is repugnant to the most and the most perfect analogies, is miraculous, and therefore incredible. Let us weigh the scripture miracles in this scale. Now the progress of the human mind, as may be seen by all the inquiries into it, and particularly by the history of association, is a thing of a determinate nature; a man's thoughts, words, and actions, are all generated by something previous; there is an established course for these things, an analogy, of which every man is a judge from what he feels in himself, and sees in others: and to suppose any number of men in determinate circumstances to vary from this general tenor of human nature in like circumstances, is a miracle,  
and

and may be made a miracle of any magnitude, *i. e.* incredible to any degree, by increasing the number and magnitude of the deviations. It is therefore a miracle in the human mind, as great as any can be conceived in the human body, to suppose that infinite multitudes of christians, *Jews*, and heathens in the primitive times, should have borne such unquestionable testimony, some expressly, others by indirect circumstances, as history informs us they did, to the miracles said to be performed by Christ, and his apostles, upon the human body, unless they were really performed. In like manner, the reception which the miracles recorded in the Old Testament met with, is a miracle, unless those miracles were true. Thus also the very existence of the books of the Old and New Testaments, of the *Jewish* and Christian religions, &c. &c. are miracles, as is abundantly shewn by the advocates for christianity, unless we allow the scripture miracles. Here then a man must either deny all analogy and association, and become an absolute sceptic, or acknowledge that very strong analogies may sometimes be violated, *i. e.* he must have recourse to something miraculous, to something supernatural, according to his narrow views. The next question then will be, which of the two opposite miracles will agree best with all his other notions; whether it be more analogous to the nature of God, providence, the allowed history of the world, the known progress of man in this life, &c. &c. to suppose that God imparted to certain select persons, of eminent piety, the power of working miracles; or to suppose that he confounded the understandings, affections, and whole train of associations, of entire nations, so as that men, who, in all other things, seem to have been conducted in a manner like all other men, should, in respect of the history of Christ, the prophets and apostles, act in a manner repugnant to all our ideas and experiences. Now, as this

last supposition cannot be maintained at all upon the footing of deism, so it would be but just as probable as the first, even though the objector should deny the possibility of the being of a God. For the least presumption, that there may be a being of immense or infinite power, knowledge, and goodness, immediately turns the scale in favour of the first supposition.

Fifthly, It is to be considered, that the evidences for the scripture miracles are many, and most of them independent upon one another, whereas the dispensation itself is a connected thing, and the miracles remarkably related to each other. If therefore only so much as one miracle could be proved to have been really wrought in confirmation of the *Jewish* or Christian revelations, there would be less objection to the supposition of a second; and, if this be proved, still less to that of a third, &c. till at last the reluctance to receive them would quite vanish (which indeed appears to have been the case in the latter part of the primitive times, when the incontestable evidences for the christian miracles had been so much examined and considered, as quite to overcome this reluctance; and it seems difficult to account for the credulity in receiving false miracles, which then appeared, but upon supposition, that many true ones had been wrought). But it is not so with the evidences. The greatest part of these have so little dependence on the rest, as may be seen even from this chapter, that they must be set aside separately by the objector. Here it ought to be added, that the objectors have scarce ever attempted to set aside any part of the evidence, and never succeeded in such an attempt; which is of itself a strong argument in favour of the scriptures, since this is plainly the most natural and easy way of disproving a thing that is false. It ought also to be observed here, that the accomplishment of prophecy, by implying a miracle, does in like manner overbear the reluctance to receive miracles.



miracles. So that if any considerable events, which have already happened in the world, can be proved to have been foretold in scripture in a manner exceeding chance, and human foresight, the objection to miracles, considered in this proposition, falls to the ground at once.

Sixthly. If any one should affirm or think, as some persons seem to do, that a miracle is impossible, let him consider, that this is denying God's omnipotence, and even maintaining, that man is the supreme agent in the universe.

### P R O P. XXIX.

*The historical Evidences for the Genuineness, Truth, and divine Authority of the Scriptures do not grow less from Age to Age; but, on the Contrary, it may rather be presumed, that they increase.*

It is sometimes alleged, as an indirect objection to the christian religion, that the evidence for facts done in former times, and at remote places, decreases with the distance of time and place; and consequently that a time may come hereafter, when the evidence for the christian religion will be so inconsiderable as not to claim our assent, even allowing that it does so now. To this I answer,

First, That printing has so far secured all considerable monuments of antiquity, as that no ordinary calamities of wars, dissolutions of governments, &c. can destroy any material evidence now in being, or render it less probable, in any discernible degree, to those who shall live five hundred or a thousand years hence.

Secondly, That so many new evidences and coincidences have been discovered in favour of the *Jewish* and *Christian* histories, since the three great concur-



ring events of printing, the reformation of religion in these western parts, and the restoration of letters, as, in some measure, to make up for the evidences lost in the preceding times; and since this improvement of the historical evidences is likely to continue, there is great reason to hope, that they will grow every day more and more irresistible to all candid, serious inquirers.

One might also allege, if it were needful, that *our* proper business is to weigh carefully the evidence which appears at present, leaving the care of future ages to Providence; that the prophetic evidences are manifestly of an increasing nature, and so may compensate for a decrease in the historical ones; and that though, in a gross way of speaking, the evidences for facts distant in time and place are weakened by this distance, yet they are not weakened in an exact proportion in any case, nor in any proportion in all cases. No one can think a fact relating to the *Turkish* empire less probable at *London* than at *Paris*, or at fifty years distance than at forty.

### P R O P. XXX.

*The Prophecies delivered in the Scriptures prove the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, even previously to the Consideration of the Genuineness of these Prophecies; but much more, if that be allowed.*

IN order to evince this proposition, I will distinguish the prophecies into four kinds, and shew in what manner it holds in respect of each kind.

There are then contained in the scriptures,  
First, Prophecies that relate to the state of the nations which bordered upon the land of *Canaan*.

Secondly, Those that relate to the political state of the *Israelites* and *Jews* in all ages.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The types and prophecies that relate to the office, time of appearance, birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the promised *Messiah*, or Christ.

Fourthly, The prophecies that relate to the state of the christian church, especially in the latter times, and to the second coming of Christ.

I begin with the prophecies of the first kind, or those which relate to the state of *Amalek*, *Edom*, *Moab*, *Ammon*, *Tyre*, *Syria*, *Egypt*, *Nineveh*, *Babylon*, and the four great successive empires of the *Babylonians*, *Persians*, *Greeks*, and *Romans*. Now here I observe, First, That if we admit both the genuineness of these prophecies and the truth of the common history of the scriptures, the very remarkable coincidence of the facts with the prophecies will put their divine authority out of all doubt; as I suppose every reader will acknowledge, upon recollecting the many particular prophecies of this kind, with their accomplishments, which occur in the old Testament. Secondly, If we allow only the genuineness of these prophecies, so great a part of them may be verified by the remains of ancient pagan history, as to establish the divine authority of that part. Thus, if *Daniel's* prophecies of the image, and four beasts, were written by him in the time of the *Babylonian* empire, if the prophecies concerning the fall of *Nineveh*, *Babylon*, *Tyre*, &c. be genuine, &c. even profane history will shew, that more than human foresight was concerned in the delivery of them. Thirdly, That such of these prophetic events as remain to this day, or were evidently posterior to the delivery of the prophecies, prove their divine authority even antecedently to the consideration of their genuineness, as is affirmed in the former part of the proposition. Of this kind are the perpetual slavery of *Egypt*; the perpetual desolation of *Tyre* and *Babylon*; the wild, unconquered state of the

*Ishmaelites*; the great power and strength of the *Roman* empire beyond those of the three foregoing empires; its division into ten kingdoms; its not being subdued by any other, as the three foregoing were; the rise of the *Mahometan* religion, and *Saracenic* empire; the limited continuance of this empire; and the rise and progress of the empire of the *Turks*. To these we may add the transactions that passed between the cotemporary kingdoms of *Syria* and *Egypt*, prophesied of in the eleventh chapter of *Daniel*. For, since these prophecies reach down to the times of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, and the beginning subjection of these kingdoms to the *Roman* power, they cannot but have been delivered prior to the events, as may appear both from the consideration of the Septuagint translation of the book of *Daniel*, and the extinction of the Biblical *Hebrew* as a living language before that time, even though the book of *Daniel* should not be considered as a genuine book; for which suspicion there is, however, no foundation. Lastly, we may remark, that these, and indeed all the other prophecies, have the same marks of genuineness as the rest of the scriptures, or as any other books; that they cannot be separated from the context without the utmost violence, so that, if this be allowed to be genuine, those must also; that history and chronology were in so uncertain a state in ancient times, that the prophecies concerning foreign countries could not have been adapted to the facts, even after they had happened, with so much exactness as modern inquirers have shewn the scripture prophecies to be, by a learned nation, and much less by the *Jews*, who were remarkably ignorant of what passed in foreign countries; and that those prophecies, which are delivered in the manner of dream and vision, have a very strong internal evidence, for their genuineness, taken from the nature



ture of dreams, as this is explained in the foregoing part of this work.

I proceed, in the second place, to shew how the prophecies, that relate to the political state of the *Jews*, prove the divine authority of the scriptures. And here, passing by many prophecies of inferior note, and of a suborbrate nature, we may confine ourselves to the promise, or prophecy, of the land of *Canaan*, given to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; to the prophecies concerning the captivity of the ten tribes, and the *Babylonish* captivity of the two tribes, with their return after seventy years; and to those concerning the much greater captivity and desolation predicted to fall upon this chosen people in the twenty-eighth chapter of *Deuteronomy*, in various places of the prophecies, and by Christ and his apostles in the New Testament. There was no natural probability, at the time when these prophecies were delivered, that any of these events should happen in the manner in which they were predicted, and have accordingly happened; but, in some, the utmost improbability: so that it must appear to every candid, intelligent inquirer, that nothing less than supernatural knowledge could have enabled those who delivered these predictions, to make them. The divine authority, therefore, of the books which contain these predictions, is unquestionable, provided we allow them to be genuine.

Now, besides the forementioned evidences of this, these prophecies have some peculiar ones attending them. Thus the mere departure of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, in order to go to the land of *Canaan*, their burying *Jacob* in *Canaan*, and carrying *Joseph's* bones with them, plainly imply that the promise of this land had been given to their ancestors. Thus also the prophecies relating to the captivities of *Israel* and *Judah*, and to their restorations, make so large a part of the old prophets, that, if they be not genuine,



genuine, the whole books must be forged; and the genuineness of those in the New Testament cannot but be allowed by all.

I come now, in the third place, to speak of the types and prophecies that relate to Christ, the time of his appearance, his offices, birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Many of these are applied to him by himself, and by the authors of the books of the New Testament; but there are also many others, whose discovery and application are left to the sagacity and industry of christians in all ages. This seems to be a field of great extent, and the evidence arising from it of an increasing nature. It is probable, that the christians of the first ages were acquainted with so many more circumstances relating to the life, death, &c. of Christ, as on this account to be able to apply a larger number of types and prophecies to him than we can. But then this may perhaps be compensated to us by the daily opening of the scriptures, and our growing knowledge in the typical and prophetical nature of them. What is already discovered of this kind, seems no ways possible to be accounted for, but from the supposition, that God, by his power and foreknowledge, so ordered the actions, history, ceremonies, &c. of the *Patriarchs* and *Jews*, and the language of the prophets, as to make them correspond with Christ, his offices, actions, and sufferings. If any one doubts of this, let him attempt to apply the types and prophecies to any other person. I will just mention four classes, into which these types and prophecies may be distinguished, and under each of them a few remarkable instances. There are then,

First, Prophecies which evidently relate to Christ, and either to him alone, or to others in an inferior degree only. Such are that of *Jacob* concerning *Shiloh*, of *Moses* concerning a great prophet and law-giver

giver, that should come after him, of *Isaiah* in his fifty-second and fifty-third chapters of *Daniel*, concerning the *Messiah*, many in almost all the prophets concerning a great prince, a prince of the house of *David*, &c. who should make a new covenant with his people, &c. &c.

Secondly, Typical circumstances in the lives of eminent persons, as of *Isaac*, *Joseph*, *Joshua*, *David*, *Solomon*, *Jonah*; and in the common history of the *Jewish* people, as its being called out of *Egypt*.

Thirdly, Typical ceremonies in the *Jewish* worship as their sacrifices in general, those of the passover and day of expiation in particular, &c. To this head we may also refer the typical nature of the high priesthood, and of the offices of king, priest and prophet, amongst the *Jews*, &c.

Fourthly, The apparently incidental mention of many circumstances in these things, which yet agree so exactly, and in a way so much above chance, with Christ, as to make it evident, that they were originally intended to be applied to him. The not breaking a bone of the Paschal Lamb; the mention of renting the garment, and casting lots upon the vesture, by *David*; of offering gall and vinegar, of looking on him whom they had pierced, of the third day upon numerous occasions, &c. are circumstances of this kind.

Now, these types and prophecies afford nearly the same evidence, whether we consider the books of the Old Testament as genuine, or no. For no one calls in question their being extant as we now have them, small immaterial variations excepted, before the time of Christ's appearance. Many of them do indeed require the common history of the New Testament to be allowed as true. But there are some, those, for instance, which relate to the humiliation and death of Christ, and the spirituality of his office, the proofs of whose accomplishment are sufficiently

ciently evident to the whole world, even independently of this.

The fourth branch of the prophetic evidences, are those which relate to the christian church. Here the three following particulars deserve attentive consideration.

First, The predictions concerning a new and pure religion, which was to be set up by the coming of the promised *Messiah*.

Secondly, A great and general corruption of this religion, which was to follow in after-times.

Thirdly, The recovery of the christian church from this corruption, by great tribulations; and the final establishment of true and pure religion, called *the kingdom of righteousness, of the saints, the new Jerusalem, &c.*

The predictions of the first and third kinds abound every where, in the old phophets, in the discourses of Christ, and in the writings of the apostles. Those of the second kind are chiefly remarkable in *Daniel*, the *Revelation*, and the epistles of St. *Paul*, St. *Peter*, St. *John*, and St. *Jude*. In how surprizing a manner the events of the first and second kind have answered to the predictions, cannot be unknown to any inquisitive serious person, in any christian country. At the same time it is evident, that the predictions of these things could have no foundation in probable conjectures when they were given. The events of the third class have not yet received their accomplishment; but there have been, for some centuries past, and are still, perpetual advances and preparations made for them; and it now seems unreasonable to doubt of the natural probability of their accomplishment, unless we doubt at the same time of the truth of the religion itself. If it be true, it must, upon more diligent and impartial examination, both purify itself, and overcome all opposition.

And



And it is remarkably agreeable to the tenor of Providence in other things, that that accomplishment of prophecy, which will hereafter evidence the truth of the christian religion in the most illustrious manner, should be effected by present evidences of a less illustrious nature.

Let me add here, that many of the psalms are peculiarly applicable to the restoration and conversion of the *Jews*, and to the final prevalence and establishment of the christian church, *i. e.* to the events of the third class.

### P R O P. XXXI.

*The Degree of Obscurity which is found in the Prophecies of the Scriptures, is not so great as to invalidate the foregoing Evidences for their divine Authority; but, on the Contrary, is itself an indirect Testimony in their Favour.*

IN order to prove this proposition, I observe,

First, That there are a sufficient number of prophecies, whose interpretation is certain, clear, and precise, to shew that their agreement with the events predicted is far above the powers of chance, or human foresight. But for the proof of this point, which takes in a great compass of literature, I must refer to the authors who have treated it in detail. And as those who have examined this point with accuracy and impartiality, do, as I presume, universally agree to the position here laid down, so those who have not done so, can have no pretence for asserting the contrary; this being an historical matter, which is to be determined as others of a like kind, *viz.* by the historial evidences. The reader may, however, form some judgment, in the gross, even from the few instances, which are alleged under the last proposition.

Secondly,



Secondly, That, even in the types and prophecies where interpreters differ from each other, the differences are often so inconsiderable, and the agreements so general, or else the prophecy so suited to the several events, to which it is applied by different interpreters, as to exclude both chance, and human foresight, *i. e.* to infer a divine communication. This point requires also a careful and candid examination, and then, I think, cannot but be determined in the affirmative; especially when the very great number of types and prophecies is taken into consideration. Fitness in numerous instances is always an evidence of design; this is a method of reasoning allowed, explicitly or implicitly, by all. And though the fitness may not be perfectly evident or precise in all, yet, if it be general, and the instances very numerous, the evidence of design, arising from it, may amount to any degree, and fall short of certainty by an imperceptible difference only. And indeed it is upon these principles alone, that we prove the divine power, knowledge, and goodness, from the harmonies, and mutual fitnesses, of visible things, and from final causes, inasmuch as these harmonies and fitnesses are precisely made out only in a few instances, if compared to those in which we see no more than general harmonies, with particular subordinate difficulties, and apparent incongruities.

That the reader may see in a stronger light, how fully the fitnesses, considered in the two foregoing paragraphs, exclude chance, and infer design, let him try to apply the types and prophecies of the four classes before-mentioned to other persons and events besides those, to which christian interpreters have applied them; and especially let him consider the types and prophecies relating to Christ. If design be excluded, these ought to be equally, or nearly so, applicable to other persons and events; which yet, I think, no serious considerate person can affirm. Now, if  
chance

chance be once excluded, and the necessity of having recourse to design admitted, we shall be instantly compelled to acknowledge a contrivance greater than human, from the long distances of time intervening between the prophecy and the event, with other such like reasons.

Thirdly, I observe that those types and prophecies, whose interpretation is so obscure, that interpreters have not been able to discover any probable application, cannot any ways invalidate the evidence arising from the rest. They are analogous to those parts of the works of nature, whose uses, and subserviency to the rest are not yet understood. And as no one calls in question the evidences of design, which appear in many parts of the human body, because the uses of others are not yet known; so the interpretations of prophecy, which are clearly or probably made out, remain the same evidence of design, notwithstanding that unsurmountable difficulties may hitherto attend many other parts of the prophetic writings.

Fourthly, It is predicted in the prophecies, that in the latter times great multitudes will be converted to the christian faith; whereas those who preach or prophesy, during the great apostasy, shall be able to do this only in an obscure, imperfect manner, and convert but few. Now the past and present obscurity of prophecy agrees remarkably with this prediction; and the opening, which is already made, since the revival of letters, in applying the prophecies to the events, seems to presage, that the latter times are now approaching; and that by the more full discovery of the true meaning of the prophetic writings, and of their aptness to signify the events predicted, there will be such an accession of evidence to the divine authority of the scriptures, as none but the wilfully ignorant, the profligate, and the obdurate, can withstand. It is therefore a confirmation of the  
prophetic

prophetic writings, that, by the obscurity of one part of them, a way should be prepared for effecting that glorious conversion of all nations, which is predicted in others, in the time and manner in which it is predicted.

## P R O P. XXXII.

*It is no Objection to the foregoing Evidences taken from the Types and Prophecies, that they have double, or even manifold, Uses and Applications; but rather a Confirmation of them.*

FOR the foregoing evidences all rest upon this foundation, viz. that there is an aptness in the types and prophecies to prefigure the events, greater than can be supposed to result from chance, or human foresight. When this is evidently made out from the great number of the types and prophecies, and the degree of clearness and preciseness of each, the shewing afterwards, that these have other uses and applications, will rather prove the divine interposition, than exclude it. All the works of God, the parts of a human body, systems of minerals, plants, and animals, elementary bodies, planets, fixed stars, &c. have various uses and subserviencies, in respect of each other; and, if the scriptures be the word of God, analogy would lead one to expect something corresponding hereto in them. When men form designs, they are indeed obliged to have one thing principally in view, and to sacrifice subordinate matters to principal ones; but we must not carry this prejudice, taken from the narrow limits of our power and knowledge, to him who is infinite in them. All his ends centre in the same point, and are carried to their utmost perfection by one and the same means. Those laws, ceremonies, and incidents,

which

which best suited the *Jewish* state, and the several individuals of it, were also most apt to prefigure the promised Messiah, and the state of the christian church, according to the perfect plan of these things, which, in our way of speaking, existed in the divine mind from all eternity; just as that magnitude, situation, &c. of our earth, which best suits its present inhabitants, is also best suited to all the changes which it must hereafter undergo, and to all the inhabitants of other planets, if there be any such, to whom its influence extends.

The following instance may perhaps make this matter more clearly understood. Suppose a person to have ten numbers, and as many lines, presented to his view; and to find by mensuration, that the ten numbers expressed the lengths of the ten lines respectively. This would make it evident, that they were intended to do so. Nor would it alter the case, and prove that the agreement between the numbers and lines arose, without design, and by chance, as we express it, to allege that these numbers had some other relations; that, for instance, they proceeded in arithmetical or geometrical progression, were the squares or cubes of other numbers, &c. On the contrary, any such remarkable property would rather increase than diminish the evidence of design in the agreement between the numbers and lines. However, the chief thing to be inquired into would plainly be, whether the agreement be too great to be accounted for by chance. If it be, design must be admitted.



## P R O P. XXXIII.

*The Application of the Types and Prophecies of the Old Testament by the Writers of the New does not weaken the Authority of these Writers, but rather confirm it.*

FOR the objections, which have been made to the writers of the New Testament on this head, have been grounded principally upon a supposition, that when an obvious literal sense of a passage, or a manifest use of a ceremony, suited to the then present times, are discovered, all others are excluded, so as to become misapplications. But this has been shewn in the last proposition to be a prejudice arising from the narrowness of our faculties and abilities. Whence it follows, that, if the scripture types and prophecies be remarkably suited to different things, which is a point that is abundantly proved by learned men, they cannot but, in their original design, have various senses and uses. And it is some confirmation of the divine authority of the writers of the New Testament, that they write agreeably to this original design of God.

It may perhaps afford some satisfaction to the reader to make some conjectures concerning the light in which the types and prophecies, which have double senses, would appear first to the ancient *Jews*, and then to those who lived in the time of our Saviour. From hence we may judge in what light it is reasonable they should be taken by us.

Let our instance be the second psalm, which we are to suppose written by *David* himself, or, at least, in the time of his reign. It is evident, that there are so many things in this psalm peculiarly applicable to *David's* ascent to the throne by God's special appointment, to the opposition which he met with both in his own nation, and from the neighbouring  
ones,

ones, and to his victories over all his opposers through the favour of God, that the *Jews* of that time could not but consider this psalm as relating to *David*. Nay, one can scarce doubt, but the Psalmist himself, whether he seemed to himself to compose it from his own proper fund, or to have it dictated immediately by the spirit of God, would have *David* principally in view. At the same time it is evident, that there are some passages, particularly the last, *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him*, i. e. in the Son, which it would be impious, especially for an *Israelite*, to apply to *David*, and which therefore no allowance for the sublimity of the eastern poetry could make applicable. It may be supposed therefore, that many, or most, considered such passages as having an obscurity in them, into which they could no ways penetrate; whereas a few perhaps, who were peculiarly enlightened by God, and who meditated day and night upon the promises made to their ancestors, particularly upon those to *Abraham*, would presume or conjecture, that a future person of a much higher rank than *David*, was prefigured thereby. And the case would be the same in regard to many other psalms: they would appear to the persons of the then present times both to respect the then present occurrences, and also to intimate some future more glorious ones; and would mutually support this latter interpretation in each other.

When the prophets appeared in the declension and captivities of the kingdoms of *Israel* and *Judah*, the same interpretation would be strengthened, and the expectations grounded thereon increased, by the plainer and more frequent declarations of the prophets concerning such a future person, and the happiness which would attend his coming. The great and various sufferings of this chosen people, their return and deliverance, their having their scriptures collected into one view by *Ezra*, and read in

their synagogues during the interval from *Ezra* to Christ, the figurative senses put upon dreams, visions, and parables, in their scriptures, &c. would all concur to the same purpose, till at last it is reasonable to expect, that the *Jews* in our Saviour's time would consider many of the institutions and ceremonies of their law, of the historical events, of the psalms appointed for the temple-worship, and of the inspired declarations of the prophets, as respecting the future times of the *Messiah*; and this, in some cases, to the exclusion of the more obvious senses and uses, which had already taken place; being led thereto by the same narrow-mindedness, which makes some in these days reject the typical and more remote sense, as soon as they see the literal and more immediate one. Now, that this was, in fact, the case of the *Jews* in the time of Christ, and for some time afterwards, appears from the New Testament, from the christian writers of the first ages, and from the Talmudical ones.

A great part, however, of the scripture types and prophecies appeared to the *Jews* to have no relation to their promised *Messiah*, till they were interpreted by the event. They expected a person that should correspond to *David* and *Solomon*, two glorious princes; but they did not see how *Isaac*, or the Paschal Lamb, should typify him; or that the circumstance of being called out of *Egypt*, the appellation of *Nazarene*, or the parting garments, and casting lots upon a vesture, should contribute to ascertain him. However, it is certain, that to persons who had for some time considered their scriptures in the typical, prophetic view mentioned in the last paragraph, every remarkable circumstance and coincidence of this kind, verified by the event, would be a new accession of evidence, provided we suppose a good foundation from miracles, or prophecies of undoubted import, to have been laid previously.

Nay,

Nay, such coincidences may be considered not only as arguments to the *Jews* of Christ's time, but as solid arguments in themselves, and that exclusively of the context. For though each of these coincidences singly taken, affords only a low degree of evidence, and some of them scarce any; yet it is a thing not to be accounted for from chance, that separate passages of the Old Testament should be applicable to the circumstances of Christ's life, by an allusion either of words or sense, in ten or an hundred times a greater number, than to any other persons, from mere accident. And this holds in a much higher degree, if the separate passages or circumstances be subordinate parts of a general type. Thus the parting the garments, the offering vinegar and gall, and the not breaking a bone, have much more weight, when it is considered, that *David*, and the Paschal Lamb, are types of the *Messiah*. And when the whole evidence of this kind which the industry of pious christians has brought to light in the first ages of christianity, and again since the revival of letters, is laid together, it appears to me to be both a full proof of the truth of the christian religion, and a vindication of the method of arguing from typical and double senses.

It may be added in favour of typical reasoning, that it corresponds to the method of reasoning by analogy, which is found to be of such extensive use in philosophy. A type is indeed nothing but an analogy, and the scripture types are not only a key to the scriptures, but seem also to have contributed to put into our hands the key of nature, analogy. And this shews us a new correspondence or analogy between the word and works of God. However, since certain well-meaning persons seem to be prejudiced against typical and double senses, I will add some arguments, whereby the writers of the New Testament may be defended upon this footing also.



First, then, Since the *Jews* in the times of the writers of the New Testament, and consequently these writers themselves, were much given to typical reasonings, and the application of passages of the Old Testament in a secondary sense to the times of the *Messiah*, this would be a common foundation for these writers, and those to whom they wrote, to proceed upon, derived from association, and the acquired nature of their minds. And it is as easy to conceive, that God should permit them to proceed upon this foundation for the then present time, though it would not extend to the world in general, to distant ages, and to persons of different educations, as that they should be left to the workings of their own acquired natures in many other respects, notwithstanding the supernatural gifts bestowed upon them in some; or as it is to conceive, that God should confer any thing, existence, happiness, &c. in any particular manner or degree.

Secondly, There are some passages in the New Testament quoted from the Old in the way of mere allusion. This cannot, I think, be true of many, where the passage is said to be *fulfilled*, without doing violence to the natural sense of the words, and of the context, in the New Testament: however, where it is, it entirely removes the objection here considered.

Thirdly, If we should allow, that the writers of the New Testament were sometimes guilty of erroneous reasonings in these or other matters, still this does not affect their moral characters at all; nor their intellectual ones, which are so manifest from the general soundness and strength of their other reasonings, in any such manner as to be of importance in respect of the evidence for the general truth of the scriptures, or for their divine authority in the first and lowest sense above considered.

## P R O P. XXXIV.

*The moral Characters of Christ, the Prophets and Apostles, prove the Truth and Divine Authority of the Scriptures.*

LET us begin with the consideration of the character of Christ. This, as it may be collected from the plain narrations of the gospels, is manifestly superior to all other characters, fictitious or real, whether drawn by historians, orators, or poets. We see in it the most entire devotion and resignation to God, and the most ardent and universal love to mankind, joined with the greatest humility, self-denial, meekness, patience, prudence, and every other virtue, divine and human. To which we are to add, that, according to the New Testament, Christ, being the Lord and creator of all, took upon himself the form of a servant, in order to save all; that, with this view, he submitted to the helplessness and infirmities of infancy, to the narrowness of human understanding, and the perturbations of human affections, to hunger, thirst, labour, weariness, poverty, and hardships of various kinds, to lead a sorrowful, friendless life, to be misunderstood, betrayed, insulted, and mocked, and at last to be put to a painful and ignominious death; also (which deserves our most serious consideration, however incongruous to our narrow apprehensions it may appear at first sight) to undergo the most bitter mental agony previously. Here then we may make the following observations.

First, That, laying down the present disorders of the moral world, and the necessity of the love of God and our neighbour, and of self-annihilation, in order to the pure and ultimate happiness of man, there seems to be a necessity also for a suffering Saviour. At least, one may affirm, that the condescension of

Christ, in leaving the glory which he had with the Father before the foundation of the world, and in shewing himself a perfect pattern of obedience to the will of God, both in doing and suffering, has a most peculiar tendency to rectify the present moral depravity of our natures, and to exalt us thereby to pure spiritual happiness. Now it is remarkable, that the evangelists and apostles should have thus hit upon a thing, which all the great men amongst the ancient heathens missed, and which however clear it does and ought now to appear to us, was a great stumbling-block to them, as well as to the *Jews*; the first seeking after wisdom, *i. e.* human philosophy and eloquence; and the last requiring a sign, or a glorious temporal Saviour. Nor can this be accounted for, as it seems to me, but by admitting the reality of the character, *i. e.* the divine mission of Christ, and the consequent divine inspiration of those who drew it, *i. e.* the truth and divine authority of the New Testament.

Secondly, If we allow only the truth of the common history of the New Testament, or even, without having recourse to it, only such a part of the character of Christ, as neither ancient nor modern *Jews*, heathens, or unbelievers, seem to contest; it will be difficult to reconcile so great a character, claiming divine authority, either with the moral attributes of God, or indeed with itself, upon the supposition of the falsehood of that claim. One can scarce suppose, that God would permit a person apparently so innocent and excellent, so qualified to impose upon mankind, to make so impious and audacious a claim without having some evident mark of imposture set upon him; nor can it be conceived, how a person could be apparently so innocent and excellent, and yet really otherwise.

Thirdly, The manner in which the evangelists speak of Christ, shews that they drew after a real copy,

copy, *i. e.* shews the genuineness and truth of the gospel history. There are no direct encomiums upon him, no laboured defences or recommendations. His character arises from a careful impartial examination of all that he said and did, and the evangelists appear to have drawn this greatest of all characters without any direct design to do it. Nay, they have recorded some things, such as his being moved with the passions of human nature, as well as being affected by its infirmities, which the wisdom of this world would rather have concealed. But their view was to shew him to the persons to whom they preached as the promised *Messiah* of the *Jews*, and the Saviour of mankind; and as they had been convinced of this themselves from his discourses, actions, sufferings, and resurrection, they thought nothing more was wanting to convince such others as were serious and impartial, but a simple narrative of what Jesus said and did. And if we compare the transcendent greatness of this character with the indirect manner in which it is delivered, and the illiterateness and low condition of the evangelists, it will appear impossible, that they should have forged it, that they should not have had a real original before them, so that nothing was wanting but to record simply and faithfully. How could mean and illiterate persons excel the greatest geniuses, ancient and modern, in drawing a character? How came they to draw it an indirect manner? This is indeed a strong evidence of genuineness and truth; but then it is of so reclusive and subtle a nature, and, agreeably to this, has been so little taken notice of by the defenders of the christian religion, that one cannot conceive the evangelists were at all aware, that it was an evidence. The character of Christ, as drawn by them, is therefore genuine and true; and consequently proves his divine mission both by its transcendent excellence, and by his laying claim to such a mission.

Here



Here it ought to be particularly remarked, that our Saviour's entire devotion to God, and sufferings for the sake of men in compliance with his will, is a pitch of perfection, which was never proposed, or thought of, before his coming (much less attempted or attained); unless as far as this is virtually included in the precepts for loving God above all, and our neighbour as ourselves, and other equivalent passages in the Old Testament.

We come, in the next place, to consider the characters of the prophets, apostles, and other eminent persons mentioned in the Old and New Testaments. Here then we may observe,

First, That the characters of the persons who are said in the scriptures to have had divine communications, and a divine mission, are so much superior to the characters which occur in common life, that we can scarce account for the more eminent single ones, and therefore much less for so large a succession of them, continued through so many ages, without allowing the divine communications and assistance, which they allege. It is true indeed, that many of these eminent persons had considerable imperfections, and some of them were guilty of great sins occasionally, though not habitually. However, I speak here of the balance, after proper deductions are made, on account of these sins and imperfections; and leave it to the impartial reader to consider, whether the prophets, apostles, &c. were not so much superior, not only to mankind at an average, but even to the best men amongst the *Greeks* and *Romans*, as is not fairly to be accounted for by the mere powers of human nature.

Secondly, If this should be doubted, their characters are, however, far too good to allow the supposition of an impious fraud and imposture; which must be the case, if they had not divine authority. We have therefore this double argument for the  
divine

divine authority of the scriptures, if we only allow the genuineness and truth of its common history.

Thirdly, The characters of the eminent persons mentioned in the scriptures arise so much, in an indirect way, from the plain narrations of facts, their sins and imperfections are so fully set forth by themselves, or their friends, with their condemnation and punishment, and the vices of wicked men, and the opposers of God and themselves, related in so candid a way, with all fit allowances, that we have in this a remarkable additional evidence for the truth of this part of the scripture history, besides the common ones before given, which extend to the whole.

Fourthly, The eminent persons here considered are sometimes charged by unbelievers with crimes, where, all circumstances being duly weighed, they did nothing unjustifiable, nothing more than it was their indispensable duty to God to do; as *Abraham* in preparing to sacrifice *Isaac*, *Joshua* in destroying the *Canaanites*, &c. We cannot determine an action to be sinful from a mere, abstracted, general definition of it, as that it is the taking away the life of a man, &c. but must carefully weigh all circumstances. And indeed there are no maxims in morality that are quite universal; they can be no more than general; and it is sufficient for human purposes, that they are so much, notwithstanding that the addition of peculiar circumstances makes the action vary from the general rule, Now the certain command of God may surely be such a circumstance.

Lastly, The perfection of virtue being of an ever-growing infinite nature, it is reasonable to expect, that mankind in its infant state, soon after the flood, and so onwards for some time, should be more imperfect, and have less of the pure and sublime precepts concerning indifference to this world, and all present things, universal unlimited charity, mortification, abstinence, chastity, &c. delivered to them, than  
we

we christians have, and less expected from them. And yet, upon the whole, the patriarchs and eminent persons among the *Jews* were *burning and shining lights* in their respective generations. However, it is also to be observed here, that the most sublime precepts of the gospel do appear from the first in the Old Testament, though under a veil; and that they were gradually opened more and more under the later prophets.

### P R O P. XXXV.

*The Excellence of the Doctrine contained in the Scriptures is an Evidence of their Divine Authority.*

THIS is an argument which has great force, independently of other considerations. Thus let us suppose, that the author of the gospel which goes under St. *Matthew's* name, was not known, and that it was unsupported by the writers of the primitive times; yet such is the unaffected simplicity of the narrations, the purity of the doctrines, and the sincere piety and goodness of the sentiments, that it carries its own authority with it. And the same thing may be said in general of all the books of the Old and New Testaments: so that it seems evident to me, that, if there was no other book in the world besides the Bible, a man could not reasonably doubt of the truth of revealed religion. *The mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart.* Men's writings and discourses must receive a tincture from their real thoughts, desires, and designs. It is impossible to play the hypocrite in every word and expression. This is a matter of common daily observation, that cannot be called in question; and the more any one thinks upon it, or attends to what passes in himself or others, to the history of the human thoughts, words, and

and actions, and their necessary mutual connections, *i. e.* to the history of association, the more clearly will he see it. We may conclude therefore, even if all other arguments were set aside, that the authors of the books of the Old and New Testaments, whoever they were, cannot have made a false claim to divine authority.

But there is also another method of inferring the divine authority of the scriptures from the excellence of the doctrine contained therein. For the scriptures contain doctrines concerning God, providence, a future state, the duty of man, &c. far more pure and sublime than can any ways be accounted for from the natural powers of men, so circumstanced as the sacred writers were. That the reader may see this in a clearer light, let him compare the several books of the Old and New Testaments with the cotemporary writers amongst the *Greeks* and *Romans*, who could not have less than the natural powers of the human mind; but might have, over and above, some traditional hints derived ultimately from revelation. Let him consider whether it be possible to suppose, that *Jewish* shepherds, fishermen, &c. should, both before and after the rise of the heathen philosophy, so far exceed the men of the greatest abilities and accomplishments in other nations, by any other means, than divine communications. Nay, we may say, that no writers, from the invention of letters to the present times, are equal to the penmen of the books of the Old and New Testaments, in true excellence, utility, and dignity; which is surely such an internal criterion of their divine authority, as ought not to be resisted. And perhaps it never is resisted by any, who have duly considered these books, and formed their affections and actions according to the precepts therein delivered.

An objection is sometimes made against the excellence of the doctrines of the scriptures, by charging  
upon



upon them erroneous doctrines, established by the authority of creeds, councils, and particular churches. But this is a manner of proceeding highly unreasonable. The unbeliever, who pays so little regard to the opinions of others, as to reject what all churches receive, the divine mission of Christ, and the evidences for the truth of the scriptures, ought not at other times to suppose the churches, much less any particular one, better able to judge of the doctrine; but should in the latter case, as well as the first, examine for himself; or, if he will take the doctrine upon trust, he ought much rather to take the evidence so.

If it can be shewn, either that the true doctrine of the scriptures differs from that which is commonly received, or that reason teaches something different from what is commonly supposed, or lastly that we are insufficient judges what are the real doctrines of scripture, or reason, or both, and consequently that we ought to wait with patience for farther light, all objections of this kind fall to the ground. One may also add, that the same arguments which prove a doctrine to be very absurd, prove also, for the most part, that it is not the sense of the passage; and that this is a method of reasoning always allowed in interpreting profane authors.

#### P R O P. XXXVI.

*The many and great Advantages which have accrued to the World from the Patriarchal, Judaical, and Christian Revelations, prove the Divine Authority of the Scriptures.*

THESE advantages are of two sorts, relating respectively to the knowledge and practice of religion. I begin with the first.

Now

Now it is very evident, that the christian revelation has diffused a much more pure and perfect knowledge of what is called natural religion, over a great part of the world, viz. wherever the profession either of christianity or mahometism prevails. And the same thing will appear, in respect of the *Judaical* and *patriarchal* revelations, to those who are acquainted with ancient history. It will be found very difficult by such persons, to account even for the pagan religions without recurring to such patriarchal communications with God, as are mentioned in the Pentateuch, and to the more full revelations made to the *Jews*. So that one is led to believe, that all that is good in any pagan or false religion, is of divine original; all that is erroneous and corrupt, the offspring of the vanity, weakness, and wickedness of men; and that properly speaking, we have no reason from history to suppose, that there ever was any such thing as mere natural religion, *i. e.* any true religion, which men discovered to themselves by the mere light of nature. These positions seem to follow from inquiries into the antiquities of the heathen world, and of their religions. The heathen religions all appear to be of a derivative nature; each circumstance in the inquiry confirms the scriptural accounts of things, and sends us to the revelations expressly mentioned, or indirectly implied, in the Old Testament, for the real original of the pagan religions in their simple state. This opinion receives great light and confirmation from Sir *Isaac Newton's* Chronology.

It appears also very probable to me, that a careful examination of the powers of human understanding would confirm the same position; and that admitting the novelty of the present world, there is no way of accounting for the rise and progress of religious knowledge, as it has taken place in fact, without having recourse to divine revelation. If we admit  
the

the *Patriarchal*, *Judaical*, and *Christian* revelations, the progress of natural religion, and of all the false pretences to revelation, will fairly arise (at least, appear possible in all cases, and probable in most) from the circumstances of things, and the powers of human nature; and the foregoing doctrine of association will cast some light upon the subject. If we deny the truth of these revelations, and suppose the scriptures to be false, we shall cast utter confusion upon the inquiry, and human faculties will be found far unequal to the task assigned to them.

Secondly, If we consider the practice of true religion, the good effects of revelation are still more evident. Every man who believes, must find himself either excited to good, or deterred from evil, in many instances, by that belief; notwithstanding that there may be many other instances, in which religious motives are too weak to restrain violent and corrupt inclinations. The same observations occur daily with regard to others, in various ways and degrees. And it is by no means conclusive against this obvious argument for the good effects of revelation upon the morals of mankind, to allege that the world is not better now, than before the coming of Christ. This is a point which cannot be determined by any kind of estimation, in our power to make; and, if it could, we do not know what circumstances would have made the world much worse than it is, had not christianity interposed. However, it does appear to me very *probable*, to say the least, that *Jews*, and *christians*, notwithstanding all their vices and corruptions, have, upon the whole, been always better than heathens and unbelievers. It seems to me also, that as the knowledge of true, pure, and perfect religion is advanced and diffused more and more every day, so the practice of it corresponds thereto: but then this, from the nature of the thing, is a fact of a less obvious kind; however, if it be true, it will

will become manifest in due time. Let us suppose a person to maintain, that civil government, the arts of life, medicines, &c. have never been of use to mankind, because it does not appear from any certain calculation, that the sum total of health and happiness is greater among the polite nations, than among the barbarous ones. Would it not be thought a sufficient answer to this, to appeal to the obvious good effects of these things in innumerable instances, without entering into a calculation impossible to be made? However, it does here also appear, that, as far as we are able to judge, civilized countries are, upon the whole, in a more happy state than barbarous ones, in all these respects.

Now, as the divine original of revelation may be directly concluded from its being the sole fountain of all religious knowledge, if that can be proved; so it will follow in an indirect way, if we suppose, that revelation has only promoted the knowledge and practice of true religion. It is not likely, that folly or deceit of any kind should be eminently serviceable in the advancement of wisdom and virtue. Every tree must produce its proper fruit. Enthusiasm and imposture cannot contribute to make men prudent, peaceable and moderate, disinterested and sincere.

#### P R O P. XXXVII.

*The wonderful Nature, and superior Excellence, of the Attempt made by Christ, and his Apostles, are Evidences of their Divine Authority.*

THIS attempt was that of reforming all mankind, and making them happy in a future state. And, when we consider first the attempt itself, and then the assurance of success in it, which appears in all their words and actions, by ways both direct and



indirect, there arises from thence alone, a strong presumption in their favour, as well as in favour of the authors of the books of the Old Testament, who have concurred in the same attempt, though no less informed of the true nature and full extent of it. For ideas and purposes of this kind could scarce enter into the hearts of weak or wicked men; much less could such persons enter upon and prosecute so great an undertaking with such prudence, integrity, and constancy, or form such right judgments both of the opposition they should meet with, and of the prevalence of their own endeavours, and those of their successors, over this opposition. Nay, one may say, that nothing less than supernatural assistance could qualify them for these purposes. No design of this kind was ever formed, or thought of, till the coming of Christ; and the pretences of enthusiasts and impostors to the same commission since, have all been copied from Christ, as being necessary to their succeeding in any measure, since his coming. If it be supposed to be the true interpretation and meaning of the scriptures, to publish final redemption, conversion, and salvation to all mankind, even the most wicked, in some distant future state, this will add great force to the present argument.

#### P R O P. XXXVIII.

*The Manner in which the Love of God, and of our Neighbour, is taught and inculcated in the Scriptures, is an Evidence of their Divine Authority.*

FOR it appears, that the scriptures do virtually include, or even expressly assert, all that the modern philosophy has discovered or verified concerning these important subjects; which degree of illumination, as it can with no plausibility be accounted for in illiterate men

men in the time of *Augustus* from natural causes, so much less can it in the preceding times from Christ up to *Moses*. This proposition is included in the thirty-fifth: however, the subject of it is of so much importance, as to deserve a separate place.

Here then, First, We may observe, that *Moses* commands the *Israelites* to love God with all the heart, and soul, and might, whereas they are to love their neighbours only as themselves. Now, though this infinite superiority of the love due to God over that due to our neighbour be perfectly agreeable to that infinite majesty and goodness of God, and nothingness of the creatures, which every new discovery in philosophy now opens to view; yet it was so little known, many ages after *Moses*, amongst the wisest of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, that we cannot ascribe it to his mere natural sagacity. The natural equality of all men, and the self-annihilation, implied in the precept of loving *all* our brethren as well as ourselves, are also the genuine dictates of true philosophy.

Secondly, In order to shew the divine authority of the scriptures, from the manner in which the love of God is taught in them, we must consider not only the direct precepts concerning this love, but also all those concerning hope, trust, fear, thankfulness, delight, &c. for all these concur to inculcate and beget in us the love of God. The same may be said of all the scriptural descriptions of God, and his attributes, and of the addresses of good men to him, which are there recorded. God is declared in the scriptures to be light, love, goodness, the source of all happiness and perfection, the father and protector of all, &c. And the eminent persons who composed the *Psalms*, and other such like addresses to God, appear to have devoted themselves entirely to him. Now, when we reflect, that there is scarce any thing of this kind in the writings of

the philosophers who preceded Christ, and nothing comparable to the scripture expressions even in those who came after him; when we farther reflect, that the writings of the ablest and best men of the present times contain nothing excellent of the devotional kind, but what may be found in the scriptures, and even in the Old Testament; there seems to be a necessity for having recourse to divine inspiration, as the original source of this great degree of illumination in the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles.

Thirdly, Good persons are, in the scriptures, styled *children of God*; *members of Christ*; *partakers of the divine nature*; *one with God and Christ, as Christ is with God*; *members of each other*; *heirs of God, and coheirs with Christ*; *heirs of all things*, &c. Expressions which have the strongest tendency to raise in us an unbounded love to God, and an equal one to our neighbour, and which include and convey the most exalted, and at the same time the most solid conceptions of this great system of things. And if we suppose, that these high titles and privileges are, according to the scriptures, to be hereafter extended to all mankind, the divine original of the scriptures will receive a new accession of evidence on this account.

#### P R O P. XXXIX.

*The Doctrine of the necessary Subserviency of Pain to Pleasure, unfolded in the Scriptures, is an Evidence of their divine Authority.*

THE scriptures give frequent and strong intimations, that the ultimate happiness which they promise, is not to be obtained in this our degenerate state, but by a previous passage through pain. *Blessed are they that mourn. We must rejoice in tribulation. The palm-bearing multitude comes out of great tribulation.*

*tribulation. The captain of our salvation, and therefore all his soldiers, must be made perfect through sufferings. Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. It is good for us to be afflicted, that we may learn to keep the commandments of God. The Jews must be captivated, and undergo the severest afflictions, before they can be made happy finally, as the people of God. Man must eat his bread in the sweat of his brow all his life, and return to dust at last; and yet still the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, and gain readmission to the tree of life, whose leaves shall heal the nations, &c. &c.* Now there is a surprizing correspondence between such expressions as these, and many modern discoveries, which shew that pain is, in general, introductory and subservient to pleasure; and particularly, that such is the present frame of our natures, and constitution of the external world, which affects our organs, that we cannot be delivered from the sensuality and selfishness, that seize upon us at our first entrance into life, and advanced to spirituality and disinterestedness, to the love of God and our neighbour, we cannot have our wills broken, and our faculties exalted and purified, so as to relish happiness wherever we see it, but by the perpetual correction and reformation of our judgments and desires from painful impressions and associations. And all philosophical inquiries of this kind seem to cast a peculiar light and evidence upon the scripture expressions before-mentioned, and to make their accuracy, and congruity with experience and observation, be much more plainly seen and felt.



## P R O P. XL.

*The mutual Instrumentality of Beings to each other's Happiness and Misery, unfolded in the Scriptures, is an Argument of their Divine Authority.*

To this head is to be referred all that the scriptures deliver concerning good and evil angels; Christ, the Lord of all, becoming the redeemer of all; *Adam's* injuring all his posterity through his frailty; *Abraham's* becoming the father of the faithful, and all nations being blessed through him; the *Jews* being the keepers of the oracles of God, and of the true religion; tyrants being scourges in the hand of God; the fulness of the Gentiles being the occasion of the final restoration of the *Jews*; and, in general, the doctrine that God prepares and disposes of every thing so, as that nothing is for itself alone, but every person and nation has various relations to others, co-operates with them through Christ, who is *the head*, and through whom the *whole body* being fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, increaseth and edifieth itself in love, till all things, both in heaven and earth, arrive, in their several orders, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Now whoever compares these scripture expressions and doctrines with the various mutual relations, subserviencies, and uses of the parts of the external world, heavenly bodies, meteors, elements, animals, plants, and minerals, to each other, cannot help seeing a wonderful analogy between the works of God and the scriptures, so wonderful as justly to entitle the last to the appellation of the word of God.

And thus we may perceive, that the scripture account of the fall of man, his redemption by Christ,  
and

and the influences exerted upon him by good and evil angels, is so far from affording an objection against the christian religion, that it is a considerable evidence for it, when viewed in a truly philosophical light. God works in every thing by means, by those which, according to our present language and short-sightedness, are termed bad and unfit, as well as by the good and evidently fit ones; and all these means require a definite time, before they can accomplish their respective ends. This occurs to daily observation in the course and constitution of nature. And the scripture doctrines concerning the fall, the redemption by Christ, and the influences of good and evil angels, are only such intimations concerning the principal invisible means that lead man to his ultimate end, happiness in being united to God, as accelerate him in his progress thither. According to the scriptures, *Adam* hurts all, through frailty; Christ saves all, from his love and compassion to all; evil angels tempt, through malice; and good ones assist and defend, in obedience to the will of God, and his original and ultimate design of making all happy. These things are indeed clothed in a considerable variety of expressions, suited to our present ways of acting, conceiving, and speaking (which ways are, however, all of divine original, God having taught mankind, in the patriarchal times, the language, as one may say, in which he spake to them then and afterwards); but these expressions can have no greater real import, than that of signifying to us the means made use of by God; he being, according to the scriptures, as well as reason, the one only real agent in all the transactions that relate to man, to angels, &c. And to object to the method of producing happiness by this or that means, because of the time required to accomplish the end, of the mixture of evil, &c. is to require, that all God's creatures should at once be created infinitely happy, or rather have

existed so from all eternity, *i. e.* should be *gods*, and not *creatures*.

### PROP. XLI.

*The Divine Authority of the Scriptures may be inferred from the superior Wisdom of the Jewish Laws, considered in a political Light; and from the exquisite Workmanship shewn in the Tabernacle and Temple.*

ALL these were originals amongst the *Jews*, and some of them were copied partially and imperfectly by ancient heathen nations. They seem also to imply a knowledge superior to the respective times. And I believe, that profane history gives sufficient attestation to these positions. However, it is certain from scripture, that *Moses* received the whole body of his laws, also the pattern of the tabernacle, and *David* the pattern of the temple, from God; and that *Bezaleel* was inspired by God for the workmanship of the tabernacle. Which things, being laid down as a sure foundation, may encourage learned men to inquire into the evidences from profane history, that the knowledge and skill to be found amongst the *Jews* were superior to those of other nations at the same period of time, *i. e.* were supernatural.

### PROP. XLII.

*The Want of Universality in the Publication of Revealed Religion is no Objection to it; but, on the Contrary, the Time and Manner, in which the Scriptures were written, and delivered to the World, are Arguments for their Divine Authority.*

HERE I observe,

First, That objections of this kind ought never to be admitted against historical evidence; and, in fact,

fact, are not, upon other subjects. It is evident, as was observed in the beginning of this chapter, that to allow the truth of the scripture history, is to allow the truth of the christian religion. Now it is very foreign to the purpose of an inquiry into the truth of the scripture history, to allege that it has not been made known to all mankind, in all ages, and under all circumstances of each individual. It must require much abstracted and subtle reasoning, and such as can never be put in competition with plain historical evidence, to connect this objection with the proposition objected to. This is therefore, at least, a strong presumption against the validity of such an objection.

Secondly, This objection seems to derive its whole force from such positions relating to the moral attributes of God, as make it necessary for us to suppose, either that he deals with all his creatures at present in an equally favourable manner, or, at least, that nothing shall be ultimately wanting to their happiness. Now the first supposition appears, upon the most transient view which we take of things, to be utterly false. There are differences of all degrees at present, in respect of all the good things which God has given us to enjoy; and therefore may be in the best of all good things, revealed religion. And indeed, if it was otherwise in respect of revealed religion, one strong argument in its favour would be wanting, viz. its analogy with the course of nature. The moral attributes of God are to be deduced from observations made upon the course of nature. If therefore the tenor of revelation be agreeable to that of nature, it must be so to the moral attributes of God. But if any one supposes, in the second place, that, notwithstanding present and apparent differences in the circumstances of God's creatures, there are no real and ultimate ones; at least, that the balance will ultimately be in favour of each individual finitely, or  
perhaps



perhaps infinitely; I answer, that this supposition is as agreeable to revelation as to natural reason; that there are as probable evidences for it in the word of God, as in his works, there being *no acceptance of persons with God, no difference between the Jew and the Gentile*, according to the scriptures; and that we may infer as strongly from the scriptures, that Christ will save all, as it can be inferred from philosophy, that all will be made happy in any way; both which positions I shall endeavour to establish hereafter, with the mutual illustrations and confirmations, which these glorious doctrines of natural and revealed religion afford to each other. And the gradual diffusion of the *Patriarchal, Judaical, and Christian* revelations, compared with the prophecies relating to the future kingdom of Christ, and with the present circumstances of things, will afford great satisfaction and joy to every pious, benevolent person, who inquires into this subject. These considerations will incline him to believe, that the gospel will, sooner or later, be preached to *every creature in heaven, in earth, under the earth, &c.* and not only preached, but received, obeyed, and made the means of unspeakable happiness to them. And thus this objection will be removed not only in speculation, and according to reason, but in fact, from the present unhappy objectors; and *they will look on him whom they have pierced.*

Thirdly, Having shewn that a gradual and partial promulgation is not inconsistent with the supposition of a true revelation, we may farther affirm, that the particular time and manner, in which the several *Patriarchal, Judaical, and Christian* revelations have been published to the world, are even arguments in their favour. This subject has been well handled by various learned men, particularly by Mr. *Arch. Law*, in his considerations on the state of the world, &c. These gentlemen have shewn, that, *cæteris manentibus*,  
which

which is in these things always to be previously allowed, the dispensations recorded in the scriptures have been, as far as we can judge, perfectly suited to the states of the world at the times when these dispensations were made respectively, *i. e.* to the improvement of mankind in knowledge speculative and practical, to their wants, and to their ability to profit in moral accomplishments; so that if we suppose either much more, or much less, light to have been afforded to mankind in a supernatural way (*cæteris manentibus*; and particularly their voluntary powers over their affections and actions, or free-will in the practical sense, remaining the same), their advancement in moral perfection, in voluntary obedience to, and pure love of God, would probably have been less: which suitableness of each revelation to the time when it was made, and to the production of the *maximum* of moral perfection, is an argument for the system of revelation, of the same kind with those for the goodness of God, which are drawn from the mutual fitnesses of the finite and imperfect parts of the natural world to each other, and to the production of the *maximum*, or greatest possible quantity of happiness.

### P R O P. XLIII.

*The Exclusion of all great Degrees of Enthusiasm and Imposture from the Characters of Christ, the Prophets and Apostles, proves their Divine Authority.*

THAT Christ, the prophets and apostles, cannot be charged with any great degrees of enthusiasm or imposture, seems allowed by many unbelievers; and is evident from the first view of their discourses and writings, and of history sacred and profane. We might say, that much more is evident. However,  
for

for the present, let us only suppose all great degrees of enthusiasm and imposture excluded, and inquire how far their divine mission may be inferred from that supposition.

First, then, If all great degrees of enthusiasm be excluded, Christ, the prophets and apostles, must know whether or no they were under the influence of the divine spirit, so as to prophesy, speak, and interpret languages, which they had never learnt, and work miracles. Indeed to suppose them not capable of distinguishing these powers in themselves and each other, is to charge them with downright madness.

Secondly, Since then they claimed these powers every where, as the seal of their commission from God; if they had them not, *i. e.* if they had not divine authority, they must be impostors, and endeavour to deceive the world knowingly and deliberately. And this imposture, whether we consider the affront offered to God, or the injury done to mankind, or its duration, its audaciousness, &c. would be the deepest and blackest that has ever appeared in the world. It is therefore excluded by supposition; and consequently, since a less degree will not account for a false claim to divine authority, we must allow, that Christ, the prophets and apostles, made a true one.

Thirdly, Let it be observed, that though cautious unbelievers do not venture to charge Christ, the prophets and apostles, either with gross enthusiasm, or abandoned imposture; in express terms; yet they find themselves obliged to insinuate both in all their attacks upon revealed religion: which is, in effect, to acknowledge the truth of the present proposition; for it is the same thing, as to acknowledge, that both the charge of gross enthusiasm, and that of abandoned imposture, are necessary to support the objections against revealed religion. Now, as neither charge, singly taken, can be maintained; so both together

together are inconsistent. Gross enthusiasm does not admit that constant caution, and cool dispassionate cunning, which abandoned imposture supposes and requires in order to succeed.

## P R O P. XLIV.

*The Reception which Christ, his Forerunners and Followers with their Doctrines, have met with in all Ages, is an Argument of their Divine Authority.*

THIS evidence does, as it were, embrace all the others, and give a particular force to them. For it will be a strong confirmation of all the evidences for the *Jewish* and christian religions, if we can shew, that the persons to whom they have been offered, have been influenced by them as much as there was reason to expect, admitting them to be true; and far more than could be expected, on supposition that they were false. The most illustrious instance of this, is the victory which the christian miracles and doctrines, with the sufferings of our Saviour, and his followers, gained over the whole powers, first, of the *Jewish* state, and then of the *Roman* empire, in the primitive times. For here all ranks and kinds of men, princes, priests, *Jewish* and heathen, philosophers, populace, with all their associated prejudices from custom and education, with all their corrupt passions and lusts, with all the external advantages of learning, power, riches, honour, and, in short, with every thing but truth, endeavoured to suppress the progress that Christ's religion made every day in the world; but were unable to do it. Yet still the evidence was but of a limited nature; it required to be set forth, attested, and explained, by the preacher, and to be attended to, and reflected upon, with some degree of impartiality,



tiality, by the hearer: and therefore, though the progress of it was quick; and the effect general, yet they were not instantaneous and universal. However, it is very evident, that any fraud, or false pretence, must soon have yielded to so great an opposition so circumstanced.

The efficacy which the christian doctrine then had in reforming the lives of many thousands, is here to be considered as a principal branch of this argument, it being evidently the most difficult of all things, to convert men from vicious habits to virtuous ones, as every one may judge from what he feels in himself, as well as from what he sees in others; and whatever does this, cannot, as it seems to me, but come from God. The false religions, and various corruptions of the true, which have from time to time appeared in the world, have been enabled to do this in the imperfect manner in which they have done it, merely, as it seems to me, from that mixture of important truths, and good motives, which they have borrowed from real revelations, *Patriarchal, Judaical, and Christian.*

In like manner, as the propagation of christianity, upon its first appearance in the world, evinces its divine original, so does the progress it has since made, and the reception which it meets with at present, amongst the several ranks and orders of men. The detail of this would run out to a great length. It may, however, be of some use, just to observe, that, notwithstanding the great prevalence of infidelity in the present times, it is seldom found to consist with an accurate knowledge of ancient history, sacred and profane, and never with an exalted piety and devotion to God.

And it is as peculiarly for the credit of christianity, that it should now be supported by the learned, as that it was first propagated by the unlearned; and an incontestable evidence for it, as appears to me, that  
it

it has been universally embraced by all eminently pious persons, to whom it has been made known in a proper manner.

The analogous observations may be made upon the reception which the *Jewish* religion met with both from the *Jews* themselves, and from the neighbouring nations. It seems impossible for *Moses* to have delivered the *Jews* from their oppression in *Egypt*, and afterwards to have subjected them to his laws, for *Joshua* to have conquered *Canaan*, for the religion to have subsisted in the succeeding times of the judges and kings, for the priests and prophets to have maintained their authority, for the people to have returned, after their captivity, with their religion in an uncorrupted state, and to have supported it and themselves against the kings of *Syria* and *Egypt*, and the power of the *Romans*, and to remain at this day a separate people dispersed all over the world, according to the prophecies, unless the miraculous part of the history of the Old Testament be allowed to be true, as well as the other.

# P R O P. XLV.

*The Reception which false Religions have met with in the World, are Arguments of the Truth of the Christian.*

I WILL here make a few short remarks,

First, Upon the polytheistical, idolatrous religions of the ancient world.

Secondly, Upon the religious institutions of *Zoroaster*.

Thirdly, upon the imposture of *Mahomet*!

Fourthly, Upon the enthusiastical sects, which have appeared from time to time amongst christians.

All these seem to have met with such success, as might be expected from the mixture of truth and  
falsehood

falsehood in them, compared with the then circumstances of things. They are therefore indirect evidences for the truth of the christian religion, since this has met with such success, as cannot be reconciled to the circumstances of things, unless we suppose it true.

And, First, The ancient pagan religions seem evidently to be the degenerated offspring of the patriarchal revelations; and so far to have been true, as they taught a God, a providence, a future state, supernatural communications made to particular persons, especially in the infancy of the world, the present corruption of man, and his deviation from a pure and perfect way, the hopes of a pardon, a mediatorial power, the duties of sacrifice, prayer, and praise, and the virtues of prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude. They were false, as they mixed and polluted these important truths with numberless fables, superstitions, and impieties. That degree of truth, and moral excellence, which remained in them, was a principal cause of their success, and easy propagation, among the people; for their moral sense would direct them to approve and receive what was fit and useful. And, had the people of those times penetrated sufficiently into the powers of the human mind, they might have concluded, that religious truths could not be of human invention. However, as the impressions, which the historical and prophetic evidences for the patriarchal revelations had made upon mankind, were not yet obliterated; they believed, upon the authority of tradition, that all important knowledge, especially in sacred matters, was of divine original.

As to the miracles said to be wrought upon certain occasions in pagan nations, we may make these two remarks: First, That the evidence for these is far inferior to that for the *Jewish* and christian miracles; so that these may be true, though those be false.

Secondly,

Secondly, That we are not sufficiently informed of the ways of providence, to infer that God did not permit, or cause, some miracles to be wrought, even in times and places, where great corruption prevailed. Divine communications and miracles were probably most common soon after the flood, in the infancy of mankind: afterwards, as they advanced towards adult age, these supernatural interpositions grew more rare, (unless upon singular occasions, as upon the publication of the law by *Moses*, and of the gospel by Christ; at which times, many and great miracles succeeded each other at short intervals, in order to command awe, attention, and belief); and it may be, that they ceased in the pagan world for some ages before Christ: or it may be otherwise; and that, in rare and extraordinary cases, the hand of God appeared in a miraculous manner. Analogy favours the last opinion, as it seems to me; which also appears to be more countenanced by history, than the contrary one; and yet the pretences to miracles amongst the pagans were undoubtedly false, in the general.

I come, in the second place, to consider the religious institutions of *Zoroaster*. We have not so full and authentic an history of these, as to compare them properly with the *Jewish* or christian revelations. If we suppose, that *Zoroaster* and *Hystaspes* set up the worship of one God, in a simple manner, teaching and inculcating the practice of virtue at the same time, this religion may be said to have considerable moral evidence in its favour. If, farther, we suppose it to be in part derived, either from the descendants of *Abraham* by *Keturah*, called *Brachmans* from him, or from that knowledge of the true God, which the ten tribes, and the *Jews*, had then communicated to that part of the world, it will become an evidence for the *Jewish* religion.



Thirdly, The religion of *Mahomet* allows and presupposes the truth of the *Jewish* and christian. Its rapid propagation was owing chiefly to the mixture of political interests. That part of its doctrines, which is good, is manifestly taken from the scriptures; and this contributed to its success. However, a comparison of mahometism with christianity, in the several particulars of each, seems to shew, that whenever a strict examination is made into the history of mahometism by its professors, the falsehood of it will quickly be made evident to them. It could not stand such a trial, as christianity has, since the revival of learning in these western parts.

It seems easy to apply what has been delivered in the three last paragraphs to the analogous particulars of the religion of *Confucius*, and of other religions found in the *East* and *West Indies*, as far as their histories are sufficiently full and authentic for that purpose.

Lastly, One may make the following remarks, with respect to the several enthusiastic sects, that arise from time to time amongst christians.

First, That their pretences to miracles and prophecies have, in general, been detected and exposed, after some examination and inquiry; unless the sect has begun to decline from other causes, before a strict examination became necessary.

Secondly, That their pretended miracles were not of that evident kind, nor done in the same open manner, &c. as the *Jewish* and christian miracles.

Thirdly, That these pretended miracles have not produced lasting effects upon the minds of men, like the *Jewish* and *Christian*. Now, though a religion may succeed for a time without true miracles, yet it seems hard to believe, that any should fail with them.

Fourthly, The success of sects has, in general, been owing to their making greater pretences to purity, and gospel perfection, than established churches, and

and to their both teaching and practising some necessary duties, which established churches have too much neglected in the corrupted state of christianity. And in this light they have been true in part, and have done the most important service to the world. Every sect of christians has magnified some great truth, not above its real value, but above the value which other sects have set upon it; and by this means each important religious truth has had the advantage of being set in a full light by some party or other, though too much neglected by the rest. And the true catholic church and communion of saints unites all these sects, by taking what is right from each, and leaving the errors, falsehoods, and corruptions of each to combat and destroy one another.

And it may be, that mankind will be able in future generations to see, how every other sect, and pretence to revelation, besides those of enthusiastic christians, in whatever age or country it has appeared, has been, all other things remaining the same, suited in the best possible manner, both to particular and general purposes; and that each has prepared the way, in its proper place, for that more complete state predicted in the scriptures under the titles of *the kingdom of heaven*, and *of righteousness, of the New Jerusalem*, &c. Even infidelity, atheism, and scepticism, have their use. The vessels of wrath are still vessels belonging to the Maker and Lord of all things, and answering his infinitely beneficent purposes. *Offences must come, though woe be to those, by whom they come!* Each sect, and pretence, and objection, has given, or will give, way in its time. The true and pure religion of Christ alone grows more evident and powerful from every attack that is made upon it, and converts the bitterness and poison of its adversaries into nourishment for itself, and an universal remedy for the pains and sorrows of a miserable, degenerate world.

## C H A P. III.

*Of the RULE of LIFE.*

HAVING delivered in the two foregoing chapters, the respective evidences for natural and revealed religion, I proceed now to inquire into the rule of life enjoined by them. This, it is evident, must be compliance with the will of God. Both natural and revealed religion teach this at first view; which is also the immediate dictate of rational self-interest. It is farther evident, that the love of God, and of our neighbour, with moderation in all selfish enjoyments, must be the will of him, who is infinitely benevolent, *i. e.* in the popular phrase, infinitely holy, merciful, just, and true, who has sent us into this world to make ourselves and others happy. This we may learn from natural religion, and the scriptures abound every where with the same precepts. I propose therefore, in this chapter, to enter into the detail of these precepts, and to apply them to the several particular circumstances of human life, digesting what I have to offer, under the heads of the seven kinds of pleasure and pain, whose history I have given in the foregoing part of this work. But first I will, in the four propositions that follow next, premise an argument in favour of virtue, which ought to have some weight, as it seems to me, even with an atheist or sceptic.

## S E C T. I.

OF THE RULE OF LIFE, AS DEDUCIBLE FROM THE  
PRACTICE AND OPINIONS OF MANKIND.

## P R O P. XLVI.

*The Practice of Mankind affords a Direction, which, though an imperfect one, may, however, be of some Use in our Inquiry after the Rule of Life.*

THIS follows, First, Because, in all the subordinate arts of life, we always pay great regard to the common judgment, practice, and experience of mankind, taken at an average, as one may say. And this is thought to be more particularly requisite for those persons to do, who are ignorant and novices in respect of these arts. Now what is reasonable in the inferior arts, must also be reasonable in the art of arts, that of living happily, of attaining our *summum bonum*, or greatest possible happiness, here and hereafter, if there be an hereafter; which there may be, even consistently with atheism and scepticism. There seems therefore a peculiar obligation, from self-interest at least, upon atheists and sceptics, since they must live here upon the same terms as other men, and stand the same chance for an hereafter, to pay some deference to the practice of others, considered as an hint and caution how to secure their own interest.

Secondly, Mankind are evidently endued with a desire of attaining happiness, and avoiding misery: and arrive at a competent knowledge of the means, which lead to this end. I have, in the foregoing



part of this work, endeavoured to shew how this desire and knowledge are generated. But the fact is certain and obvious, whether that account be satisfactory or no.

Thirdly, Those who admit a benevolent author of nature, in any sense of these words, will be inclined to believe, that mankind must in some degree be fitted to attain happiness; and also, in consequence thereof, attain it in fact. And even atheistical and sceptical persons, when they see how blind fate, or nature, or whatever term else they think fit to use, gives to all animals appetites, instincts, and objects, in general, suited to their well-being, ought, from an argument of induction, to expect something analogous to this in mankind, previously to their inquiry into the fact.

It appears therefore, that the practice of mankind, taken at an average, may be of some use to us in our investigation of the rule of life; and yet these same considerations shew, that the light thereby afforded can be no more than a very imperfect one. The error, irregularity, and misery, which are every where conspicuous, prove at once, that the practice of mankind is no infallible guide.

#### P R O P. XLVII.

*The Opinions of Mankind afford an imperfect Direction in respect of the Rule of Life, which is preferable to that drawn from their Practice.*

THAT the opinions of mankind, concerning the means of obtaining happiness, are both of real use, and yet an imperfect rule in many respects, will appear, if we apply the reasoning used in the foregoing proposition to them.

That

That this imperfect rule is, however, preferable to that drawn from the mere practice, follows, inasmuch as the opinions of mankind are, in general, formed after experience, and often upon mature deliberation, when they are free from the violent impulses of their appetites and passions, and at a more proper and equal distance from the objects under consideration, than can well be at the time of action.

## P R O P. XLVIII.

*The Rule of Life drawn from the Practice and Opinions of Mankind, taken at an Average, is favourable to the Cause of Virtue.*

I WILL first consider the rule supposed to be taken from the mere practice of mankind.

Now it appears at first sight, that this rule would exclude all eminent degrees both of virtue and vice. A person who should be similar to the whole aggregate of mankind, considered as one great individual, would have some seeds and shoots of every virtue, and every vice, and yet none in an eminent degree: his virtues and vices would only exert themselves, when called forth by strong motives and occasions: in which cases, however, this fictitious person, this type and representative of the whole species would not fail to shew, that he had all kinds of good and bad dispositions, all balancing and restraining one another, unless where extraordinary incidents turn the scale in favour of each particular respectively: so that, if the mere practice of mankind should be thought sufficient to ground a rule upon, we should be directed by this to avoid all great degrees both of virtue and vice, and to keep our appetites and passions in subjection to one another, so as that none should prevail over the rest, unless upon particular

extraordinary occasions. And a person, formed according to this model, would be reckoned a neutral, moderate, prudent man, not much loved or hated by those with whom he conversed; however, respected and regarded, rather than otherwise. We may also suppose, that his life would be much chequered with happiness and misery; and yet, for the most part, be void of all high degrees of either; upon the whole, probably rather happy, than miserable. And thus the practice of mankind would, as it appears to me, lead to a low degree both of virtue and happiness, and exclude all that violence and exorbitancy of passion and appetite, which is one chief source and occasion of vice. For almost all kinds of vice are the excesses, and monstrous offsprings, of natural appetites; whereas the virtues are, in general, of a moderate nature, and lie between the two extremes. That moderation therefore; which the practice of mankind, taken so as to make the opposite extremes balance each other, directs us to, must, upon the whole, be more favourable to virtue than to vice.

Let us next inquire to what rule of life the opinions of mankind would lead us, or how far the several virtues or vices are generally esteemed to conduce to happiness or misery. Now, as the general practice of mankind excludes all gross vices, so does the general opinion, but in a stronger manner. It does also exclude all eminent virtues; but then it does this in a weaker manner than the general practice; and, upon the whole, it turns the scale greatly in favour of virtue, and against vice, as means of private happiness; as will immediately appear, if we consider the particular virtues and vices of temperance and intemperance, meekness and anger, beneficence and avarice, gratitude and ingratitude, &c. as opposed to, and put in competition with, each other, in the judgement of mankind. And yet it does not seem by any means, that, according to the general  
opinion

opinion of mankind, the greatest degree of virtue has the fairest prospect for happiness in this world.

But then, with respect to that other world, for which there is at least this presumption of general opinion, we have almost an universal consent, of all ages and nations, that all degrees of virtue and vice will there meet with their proper and proportional reward and punishment. Now an impartial sceptic must either enter the lists, and fairly consider what arguments there are for or against a future state, and reason upon the subject, *i. e.* cease to be a sceptic; or else this general opinion of mankind in favour of a future state must, for the mechanical reasons alleged in the first part of this work, give some degree of determination to him here, as in other cases, where the mind is perfectly *in equilibrio*. For the same reasons, the almost universal consent of mankind in the superior advantages of virtue in a future state, by them supposed, ought to have some weight with such a person, even though he should still remain *in equilibrio*, as to the opinion of a future state, because then it would be as probable as the other side of the question.

And, upon the whole, we may make the following conclusions.

1. That a person who should form his life partly upon the practice of mankind, and partly upon their opinions, would incline considerably to the side of virtue.

2. That, if he thought the rule drawn from the opinions of mankind preferable to that drawn from their practice, according to the last proposition, he must incline more to the side of virtue.

3. That, if the future state, which commences at the expiration of this life, be supposed of indefinitely more value than it, and certain, he ought to adhere strictly to virtue, and renounce all vice. And the conclusion will be the same, though there be only a strong,



strong, or a moderate probability, or even an equal chance, nay, I might almost say, a bare possibility, of the reality, and great importance, of a future life; since what he would forfeit in this life by a strict adherence to virtue, is confessedly of small importance in common cases.

4. That all great degrees of vice are contrary to the common sense, practice, and experience of mankind.

5. And therefore, lastly, If a man gives himself up to vicious courses, pretending cool rational scepticism and uncertainty in religious matters, he must either deceive himself, or endeavour to impose upon others. A person who lay entirely afloat, would from the susceptibility of infection, allowed by all, and above explained from our frame, suffer himself to be formed by the practices and opinions of mankind at an average, *i. e.* would incline to the side of virtue: and therefore a person who inclines the contrary way, must be drawn aside from the neutral point of scepticism by secret prejudices and passions.

It may be objected to the reasoning used in the former part of this proposition, that whatever be the opinions of mankind, their practice at an average is by no means at an equal distance from perfect virtue, and gross vice; but approaches much nearer to the latter extreme: and that this appears both from the observation of the facts, and from the declarations of the scriptures.

First, then, Let us consider the observation of the facts. And here the objectors will be ready to heap together the many instances of violence, revenge, cruelty, injustice, ingratitude, treachery, want of natural affection, brutal sensuality, anger, envy, moroseness, ambition, avarice and selfishness, which history and experience, public and private, are able to furnish; and will urge, that a person who should copy after mankind taken at a medium, would be a very  
 sensual,

sensual, selfish, malevolent, and every way vicious creature. And it must be confessed, nay, I am so far from denying, that I every where suppose, and lay down as a principle, that there is much corruption and wickedness all over the world. But that the moral evil in the world exceeds the moral good, would be very difficult to prove.

For, First, How shall we make the computation? Who shall sum up for us all the instances of the foregoing and other vices, and weigh them in a just balance against the contrary instances of love to relations, friends, neighbours, strangers, enemies, and the brute creation; of temperance and chastity, generosity, gratitude, compassion, courage, humility, piety, resignation, &c? The case between the virtues and the vices, *i. e.* between moral good and evil, seems to resemble that between pleasure and pain, or natural good and evil. The instances of pleasure are, in general, more numerous, but less in quantity, than those of pain; and though it is impossible to speak with certainty, because no man can be qualified to make the estimate, yet pleasure seems to prevail upon the whole. In like manner, the instances of benevolence of some kind or other, though mixed with many imperfections, of a partial self-government, of a superstitious, enthusiastic, idolatrous, or lukewarm piety, one or other, occur in almost all the most familiar circumstances of human life, and intermix themselves with the most common, ordinary thoughts, words, and actions: whereas the instances of sensuality, malevolence, and profaneness, are rarer, as it seems, though often of a more glaring nature.

Secondly, The imperfection of virtue, which I allow, and even lay down in mankind in general, makes them, in general, apt to magnify the vices of others. Perfect virtue may be supposed to be but just perfectly candid and equitable; and therefore im-  
perfect

perfect virtue is most probably too censorious, especially since men, by blaming others, hope to exculpate or exalt themselves. And, agreeably to this, common experience shews, that bodily infirmities, disappointments, pride, self-indulgence, and vice of all kinds, dispose men to look upon the dark side of every prospect, and to magnify the evils natural and moral, that are in the world, both in their own thoughts, and in their discourses to others. It is also to be added here, that as our opinions are more in favour of virtue than our practice, so our rule of judging must of consequence much condemn the general practice. This circumstance is very necessary for the moral improvement of the world; but, if over-looked, it may mislead in the present inquiry.

Thirdly, The greater intenseness of the particular pains above the corresponding pleasures in general, and of the particular vices above the opposite virtues, as just now mentioned, tends, for most eminent and beneficent final causes in both cases, to affect the imagination and memory with stronger and more lasting impressions, so as to occur more readily to the invention in all inquiries and speculations of this kind.

Fourthly, If we suppose, that natural good prevails, upon the whole, in the world, analogy seems to require, that moral good (which is, in general, its cause) should also prevail in like manner. Farther, as we judge, that natural good prevails from the general desire of life, the pleasure of recollecting persons and places, and renewing our acquaintance with them, &c. so the same things seem to determine, that mankind is, upon the whole, rather amiable and respectable, than hateful and contemptible, *i. e.* rather virtuous than vicious.

Lastly, It is to be observed, that, in an accurate way of speaking, virtue and vice, are mere relative terms,

terms, like great and little. Whence the average of mankind may be considered as a middle point between the positive and negative quantities of virtue and vice, as a neutral situation. And, upon this supposition, we might first shew, that it is man's greatest interest, his *summum bonum*, at least, to be neutral; and afterwards, that he ought to press forward with all possible earnestness towards the infinite perfection of God, though ever at an infinite distance. For, as every finite length is infinitely nearer to nothing, than to a metaphysically infinite one (to make this supposition for argument's sake); so all finite virtue is infinitely more distant from the infinite perfection of God, than from nothing. And thus indeed all our righteousness is *filthy rags*, and all our virtue infinite vice. But this method of considering the present subject is far from opposing the purport of this section.

If we should call all mere self-regards vice, and all regards to God, and our neighbour, virtue; which is a very proper language, and one that would render the terms of this inquiry precise; it seems probable to me, that virtue abounds more, upon the whole, than vice. A view to the good of others, at least near relations, is a general motive to action; and a design to please God, at least not to offend him, is very common in the bulk of mankind, or even the worst. The most ordinary and trivial actions are performed without any explicit view at all, at least any that we remember a few moments after the action, *i. e.* are automatic secondarily; and so cannot be considered as either virtuous or vicious; or, if they be, we must judge of their complexion by that of the more eminent ones.

Secondly, It may be objected, that, according to the scriptures, mankind are in a lost fallen state; *that they are all gone out of the way, and become corrupt and abominable; that there is none that doth good, &c.*

I answer,



I answer, that these and such like expressions seem to refer to a former state of innocence in paradise, to a future kingdom of righteousness, promised in both the Old and New Testament, and to the rule of life laid down there, with the conditions requisite to our admittance into this happy state: and that, in this view of things, the virtue of mankind in general is as deficient, as their happiness falls short of the joys of the blessed; agreeably to which, the present life is, in the scripture, represented as a scene of vanity, labour, and sorrow. And it is a most important and alarming consideration, that the common virtue of mankind will not entitle us to a future reward after death; *that few shall find the straight gate; and that, unless our righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, we can in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven, here or hereafter.* But then, as, notwithstanding the curse passed upon man, and upon the ground, God is represented in scripture *as opening his hand, and filling all things living with plenteousness*, as being kind to all, and manifesting his infinite and invisible goodness by visible things, *i. e.* as making natural good to prevail upon the whole, that so we may, on this account, be thankful to him, and love him with all our hearts, as he commands; so the corresponding precept of loving our neighbour as ourselves, seems to infer, that our neighbour is amiable upon the whole. And we may suppose, that moral good prevails in general, in a degree proportional to the prevalence of natural good: or, however we understand the scripture language on this head, it cannot be contrary to the foregoing reasoning. It must appear from thence, that we ought to be, at least, as good as mankind at a *medium*, in order to obtain the *medium* of happiness; and that, if we have higher views, our road lies towards the infinite perfection of virtue, towards spirituality, benevolence,

lence, and piety, and not towards sensuality, selfishness, or malevolence.

## P R O P. XLIX.

*The Rule of Life drawn from the Practice and Opinions of Mankind, corrects and improves itself perpetually, till at last it determines entirely for Virtue, and excludes all Kinds and Degrees of Vice.*

For, since the imperfect rule, drawn in the last proposition, is, at least, so favourable to virtue, as to exclude all great vices, we may conclude, that all grossly vicious persons ought to be left out in collecting the rule of life from the practice and opinions of mankind; and that our rule will approach nearer to a perfect one thereby. And as this our second rule, taken from the virtuous and superior orders of the vicious, determines more in favour of virtue, than our first, taken indifferently from all the orders both of the virtuous and vicious, so it will engage us to exclude more of the vicious from our future estimate; and so on, till at last we determine entirely in favour of virtue. At least, this is a presumption, which rises up to view, when we consider the subject in the method here proposed. Since it appears from the first general consideration of the practice and opinions of mankind, that grossly vicious persons must be unhappy, it is not reasonable to allow them any weight in determining what is the proper method for attaining the greatest possible happiness. And as the same observation recurs perpetually, with respect to all the orders of the vicious, we shall at last be led to take the most virtuous only, as the proper guides of life.

Grossly vicious persons may also be excluded, from the manifest blindness and infatuation in common affairs,

affairs, which attends them; and as this extends to the vice of sensuality in particular, so this vice may be farther excluded from that tendency of our natures to spirituality, in our progress through life, which is allowed by all, and explained in the foregoing part of this work upon the principle of association. Malevolence is also excluded, because it is itself misery, and, by parity of reason, benevolence must be a proper recommendation for those, whose example and judgment we would follow in our endeavours after happiness. And it does not appear in this way of proposing these matters, that the ultimate ratio of things admits of any limit to our spirituality or benevolence, provided we suppose, that, at the expiration of this life, a progressive scene of the same kind commences.

The method of reasoning here used bears some resemblance to, and is somewhat illustrated by, the method of approximation practised by mathematicians, in order to determine the roots of equations to any proposed degree of exactness. Farther, as it is common in infinite serieses for the three or four first terms either to shew what the whole series is, or, at least, that it is infinite; so here the ever-growing and superior excellence of spirituality and benevolence, which the foregoing considerations open to view, by recurring perpetually, and correcting the immediately precedent determination in every step, may incline one to think, in correspondence to that method of reasoning in serieses, that spirituality and benevolence ought to be made infinite in the ultimate ratio which they bear to sensuality and selfishness.

But this method of reasoning may also be illustrated, in a more popular way, by applying it to more obvious inquiries. I will give two instances of this, the first in the health of the body natural, the second in the welfare of the body politic.

Suppose

Suppose then that a person entirely ignorant of physic, theoretical and practical, and disposed to treat it as mere guess-work and uncertainty, should, however, be desirous to know, since he must eat, what diet is most conducive to health. The first and most obvious answer will be, the general diet of mankind; because this is the result of general experience, and of the natural appetites, which are in so many other instances fitted to the objects themselves, and to the uses and pleasures, public and private, of human life. And thus the inquirer would be restrained from all gross excesses in the quantity or qualities of his diet. But if he farther observes, that the opinions of mankind tend more to moderation in diet, than their practice: and that both the practice and opinions of those who appear by other criterions to be the best judges, tend more to moderation than those of mankind at an average; and, lastly, that the sensual and intemperate ought entirely to be excluded from having any share in determining this inquiry; this will lead him to great moderation in diet, or even to abstemiousness.

In like manner let it be asked, what principles of government are most conducive to the public welfare? Are private virtues, or private vices, most to be encouraged? Here indeed the answer drawn from the average of states will not be an exact medium between both, so as to discourage all the virtues, and all the degrees of them, as much as the vices, and their degrees; and *vice versa*, to encourage both equally; but will, upon the whole, be greatly favourable to virtue. However, since avarice, vain-glory, resentment, luxury, &c. are, in certain respects, even promoted, and the greatest virtues sometimes persecuted, the practice of legislators and magistrates, in enacting and enforcing laws, will not be entirely favourable to virtue. But then, if we take their opinions, especially those of the legislators the most celebrated for wisdom, and leave out barbarous



nations, infant states as yet unsettled, and such as approach near to their dissolution, the average from the remainder will give the advantage to virtue more and more perpetually. And it may be remarked of both these instances, that they prove in part the thing to be illustrated by them, being not mere emblems only, but in part the reality itself. For moderation in diet is one principal virtue, and extremely requisite to preserve benevolence in perfection; and health a great ingredient towards happiness. And the public happiness, which arises from the cultivation of private virtues, includes private happiness within itself.

Perhaps it may not displease the reader just to hint, that the same method of reasoning may be made use of in favour of the christian religion.— All ages and nations have in general believed some revelation. There must therefore be some true one. But the christian is plainly the religion of the most learned and knowing part of mankind, and is, in general, more earnestly believed, in proportion as men are wiser and better. If we except the *Mahometans*, the rest of the world are mere savages. But mahometism bears testimony to both the Old and New Testament. If the unbeliever will not be determined by this himself, let him at least allow, that the more ignorant and unlearned may be directed by it to the true religion. But then they are not to be supposed capable of making objections. Whoever has a capacity for this, has also a capacity to receive the proper answers.

It is evident, however, that observations of this kind, drawn from the common sense and judgment of mankind, cannot carry us to great lengths with precision and certainty. They are very convincing and striking, in respect of the first principles and rudiments; but, if we would descend to minute particulars with accuracy, recourse must be had to the several practical theories of each art.

SECT.

## S E C T. II.

OF THE REGARD DUE TO THE PLEASURES  
AND PAINS OF SENSATION IN FORMING  
THE RULE OF LIFE.

## P R O P. L.

*The Pleasures of Sensation ought not to be made a primary Pursuit.*

IN order to shew this, let us put the extreme case of the primary pursuit of sensible pleasure; and suppose, that a person endeavours to gratify every impulse of his bodily appetites, however contrary such gratification may be to the virtues of temperance and chastity. Now it is evident that such a one would soon destroy the bodily faculties themselves, thereby rendering the objects of sensible pleasure useless, and also precipitate himself into pain, diseases, and death, those greatest of evils in the opinion of the voluptuous. This is a plain matter of observation verified every day by the sad examples of loathsome, tortured wretches, that occur which way soever we turn our eyes, in the streets, in private families, in hospitals, in palaces. Whether the scriptures give a true account how all this sin and misery were first introduced into the world; also whether our reason be able to reconcile it with the moral attributes of God, or no; still, that positive misery, and the loss even of sensual happiness, are thus inseparably connected with intemperance and lewdness, is an evident fact, that no unbeliever, no atheist, no sceptic, that will open his eyes, can dispute. And it is to be observed, that the real in-

P 2 stances

stances do not, cannot, come up to the case here put of a man's yielding to every sensual inclination. The most gross and debauched have had some restraints from some other desires or fears, from the quarters of imagination, ambition, &c. It is evident therefore, *a fortiori*, that the mere gratification of our sensual appetites cannot be our primary pursuit, our *summum bonum*, or the rule and end of life. They must be regulated by, and made subservient to, some other part of our natures; else we shall miss even the sensible pleasure, that we might have enjoyed, and shall fall into the opposite pains; which, as has been observed before, are, in general far greater, and more exquisite, than the sensible pleasures.

That indulgence in sensual gratifications will not afford us our *summum bonum*, may also be inferred from the following arguments, viz. that it destroys the mental faculties, the apprehension, memory, imagination, invention; that it exposes men to censure and contempt; that it brings them to penury; that it is absolutely inconsistent with the duties and pleasures of benevolence and piety; and that it is all along attended with the secret reproaches of the moral sense, and the horrors of a guilty mind. Now it is impossible, as will appear from the foregoing history of association, how much soever a man may be devoted to sensual indulgences, entirely to prevent the generation of the several mental affections; but it is in our power, by an inordinate pursuit of the sensible pleasures, to convert the mental affections into sources of pain, and to impair and cut off many of the intellectual pleasures, so as that the balance shall be against us upon the whole. It follows therefore from this utter inconsistency of the sensible pleasures, when made a primary pursuit, with the intellectual ones, that they ought not to be so; but must be subjected to, and regulated by, some more impartial law, than that of mere sensual desire.

The

The same thing may be concluded, in a more direct way, from the history of association. For the sensible pleasures are the first pleasures of which we are capable, and are the foundation of the intellectual ones, which are formed from them in succession, according to the law of association, as before explained. Now which way soever we turn our view, that which is prior in the order of nature is always less perfect and principal, than that which is posterior, the last of two contiguous states being the end, the first the means subservient to that end, though itself be an end in respect of some foregoing state. The sensible pleasures therefore cannot be supposed of equal value and dignity with the intellectual, to the generation of which they are made subservient. And we might be led to infer this from the mere analogy of nature, from the numberless parallel instances which daily observation suggests, and without taking into consideration the infinite beneficence of the supreme cause, which yet makes this argument much more satisfactory and convincing.

Nay, one may go farther, and observe, that as many persons are evidently forced from the inordinate pursuit of sensible pleasure by its inconsistency with itself, and with the other parts of our frame, so it seems, that, if human life was continued to an indefinite length, and yet nothing abated from the rigour of those wholesome severities, and penal sufferings, which sensuality brings upon us, more and more individuals would perpetually be advanced thereby to a state of spirituality; and that it would be impossible for any man to persist for ever in sacrificing all to his sensual appetites, in *making his belly his god*, upon such disadvantageous and painful terms. Intellectual desires, (*i. e.* desires in which no particular sensible pleasure is conspicuous, though they arise from a multiform aggregate of the traces of such) must be formed, as we see they are in fact, in the most



luxurious and debauched; and these would at last become sufficient to struggle with and overpower the sensual desires, which would at the same time be weakened by associations with intense pains and sufferings. And this affords us a pleasing glimpse not only of a future state, but also of what may be done there by still greater severities, for those whom the miseries of this life could not free from the slavery to their bodily appetites; at the same time that it is the strongest incentive to us all, to apply ourselves with earnestness and assiduity to the great business and purport of the present life, the transformation of sensuality into spirituality, by associating the sensible pleasures, and their traces, with proper foreign objects, and so forming motives to beneficent actions, and diffusing them over the whole general course of our existence.

Lastly, The inferior value of the sensible pleasures may be deduced from their being of a confined local nature, and injuring or destroying prematurely, *i. e.* before the body in general comes to its period, the particular organs of each, when indulged to excess; whereas the intellectual pleasures affect the whole nervous system, *i. e.* all the sensible parts, and that nearly in an equal manner, on account of the varieties and combinations of sensible local, and of nascent intellectual pleasures, which concur in the formation of the mature intellectual ones; so that though some of them should be indulged to excess, and out of due proportion to the rest, this will be more consistent with the gentle, gradual decay of the mortal body.

We may add, that the duration of mere sensual pleasure is necessarily short; and that, even when free from guilt, it cannot, however, afford any pleasing reflections; whereas one of the principal tendencies of our natures is, and must be, from the power of association in forming them, to the pleasures

tures of reflection and consciousness. In like manner, the evident use and restriction thereto of one of the principal sensible pleasures to preserve life and health, with all the consequent mental faculties, and executive bodily powers; of the other to continue the species, and to generate and enlarge benevolence; make the subordinate nature of both manifest in an obvious way, and without entering minutely into the history of association: at the same time that these remarks, when further pursued, unite with that history, and are eminent parts of the foregoing argument; taken directly from thence.

Thus it appears, that the pleasures of sensation ought not to be made the primary pursuit of life; but require to be restrained and directed by some foreign regulating power. What that power is, I now come to shew in the next proposition.

#### P R O P. LI.

*The Pursuit of sensible Pleasure ought to be regulated by the Precepts of Benevolence, Piety, and the moral Sense.*

THIS may be proved by shewing, that the regulation of our sensible pleasures, here proposed, will contribute both to their own improvement, and to that of the other parts of our natures.

Now benevolence requires, that the pleasures of sense should be made entirely subservient to the health of the body and mind, that so each person may best fill his place in life, best perform the several relative duties of it, and prolong his days to their utmost period, free from great diseases and infirmities; instances of which have much authority, and a very beneficial influence, in the world. All gratifications therefore, which tend to produce diseases in the body, and disturbances in the mind, are forbidden

bidden by benevolence, and the most wholesome diet as to quantity and quality enjoined by it. The rules of piety are to the same purpose, whether they be deduced from our relation to God, as our common father and benefactor, who wills that all his children should use his blessings so as to promote the common good thereby; or from the natural signatures of his will in the immediate pleasures and advantages arising from moderate refreshment, and the manifest inconveniences and injuries caused by excess in quantity or quality; or from his revealed will, by which temperance is commanded, and all intemperance severely threatened. In like manner, the moral sense directs us implicitly to the same moderation, and government of our appetites, whether it be derived explicitly from the foregoing rules of piety and benevolence, or from ideas of decency, rational self-interest, the practice of wise and good men, the loathsomeness of diseases, the odiousness and mischiefs of violent passions, &c. It is evident therefore, that all these three guides of life lead to the same end, viz. great moderation in sensual enjoyments, though they differ somewhat in their motives, and the commodiousness of their application as a rule in the particular occurrences of life.

It is evident at the same time, that we are no losers, in respect of the sensible pleasures, by this steady adherence to moderation. Our senses, and bodily faculties, are by this means preserved in their perfection; so as to afford the natural exquisite gratification, and to enable us to perform the several animal functions with ease and pleasure, and to carry us on to old age with all the integrity of these senses and faculties, that is consistent with the necessary decay and dissolution of our earthly body. The same moderation and health arising from it, inspire men with perpetual serenity, cheerfulness, and good-will, and with gratitude towards God, who  
*gives*

*gives us all things richly to enjoy*, and the sensible pleasures in particular, as the means and earnest of far greater, both here and hereafter. Now it is observable in the common intercourses of life, that associated circumstances add greatly to our pleasures. Thus the pleasure of receiving a thing from a friend, of making a friend partaker of it, of sociality and mirth at the time of enjoyment, &c. greatly enhance the gratifications of taste, as in feasts, and public entertainments. Much more then may the pure and exalted pleasures of benevolence and piety, *the eating and drinking to the glory of God* improve these pleasures.

And as we are no losers, but great gainers, upon the whole, by religious abstemiousness, in respect of the sensible pleasure; so are we much more obviously so, in respect of the sensible pains and sufferings, which the intemperate bring upon themselves. These are of the most exquisite kind, and often of long duration, especially when they give intervals of respite, thus exceeding the inventions of the most cruel tyrants. They impair the bodily and mental faculties, so as to render most other enjoyments imperfect and insipid, dispose to peevishness, passion, and murmuring against Providence, and are attended with the horrors of a guilty mind. It follows therefore, that he who would obtain the *maximum* of the sensible pleasures, even those of taste, must not give himself up to them; but restrain them, and make them subject to benevolence, piety, and the moral sense.

COR. Besides the sensible pains, which excesses bring upon men, there are some which occur in the daily discharge of the functions of life, from fatigue, labour, hardships, &c. Now it follows from the same method of reasoning, as that used in the two foregoing propositions, that the proper method of avoiding these pains is not to aim at it directly,  
but



but in every thing to be guided by the precepts of benevolence, piety, and the moral sense; and that delicate and effeminate persons endure more from this head of sufferings, than the charitable and devout, who *go about doing good*, at the apparent expence of their ease and quiet.

## P R O P. LII.

*To deduce practical Rules concerning Diet.*

WHAT that moderation in diet is, which would most contribute to the health of the body and mind, and consequently which duty requires, is difficult to determine in particular cases. The following subordinate rules may, however, afford some assistance in this matter.

First, then, It is necessary to abstain from all such things as the common experience of mankind determines to be unwholesome, either in general, or to the particular persons who make the inquiry. There are indeed some vulgar errors of this kind, that are generally received, and which, by being observed, may a little abridge one's liberty, without use or necessity. However, this is of small moment, in comparison of the dangers arising from the free use of meats and drinks found by the repeated observation of those who have made the trial, to be hurtful, generally or particularly. There still remains, after all these are set aside, a sufficient variety of things approved as wholesome by the same common experience, to answer all the purposes of life, health, and even sensible pleasure. This rule will be farther explained by those that follow.

Secondly, We ought either totally to abstain from, or, however, to use with great caution and moderation, all foods of high relish, whose tastes and sinells are pungent and acrid; all which, though  
made

made grateful by custom, are at first disagreeable ; all which bear a great affinity in taste, smell, and generical or specific characteristics, to such as are known to be hurtful ; which are poisonous during a particular state, previous to coction, or other preparation ; which are uncommon, or which have very particular effects upon the functions and secretions. For all these things are signs of active properties in the foods to which they belong, and shew them to be rather proper for medicines, than for common diet ; to be bodies which by an extraordinary efficacy may reduce the solids and fluids back to their natural state, when they have deviated from it ; and therefore which are very unsuitable to the natural state.

We may consider farther, that strong tastes, smells, &c. are, according to the modern philosophy, marks of great powers of attraction and cohesion in the small component particles of natural bodies. Since therefore it is the manifest design of the descending serieses of arteries in animals to separate the particles of their aliment from each other, also the particles of these particles, &c. that so the smallest particles, or the *minima divisibilia*, meeting in the veins, may unite according to their respective sizes, and mutual actions, *i. e.* to separate what is heterogeneous, and congregate what is homogeneous, a great difficulty and burden must be laid upon the circulation, and upon what is called nature in the body, by all highly agreeable flavours ; and, unless a proportional degree of muscular action impels the blood forward, particles of an undue size must remain undivided, and form obstructions, which may either never be removed, or not till the obstructing particles become putrid ; and thus, being dissolved, and mixed with the animal juices, infect them with putrescence.

Still farther, it may be remarked, that the same active particles in foods are probably the sources and recruits of that nervous power, or of some requisite

to it, by which animal sensation and motion, and, by consequence, intellectual apprehension and affection, and their effects upon the body, are carried on. Now it is evident, that affection raised to a certain height, and executive powers ready to answer the first call, are a mental disease of the most pernicious tendency. High-relished aliments, which generate it, are therefore carefully to be avoided, on one hand; as a very insipid diet, on the other, seems insufficient to qualify us for performing the requisite functions of life. But there is little danger of erring on this hand, our appetites being but too sensibly gratified with the high relishes. We may add, as nearly allied to these considerations, that by storing our blood, and the solids thence formed with active properties, we lay up matter for future pains, both bodily and mental, whenever either body or mind become disordered, at the same time that a high diet has, as we see, an evident tendency to disorder both.

This second rule coincides, for the most part, with the first; and may be made use of to extend and confirm it. Those meats and drinks, which are found by experience to be hurtful, have, for the most part, high relishes. We may therefore determine against an aliment of a high flavour from a narrower experience, than against one of a common moderate flavour. And it is very necessary to attend to this criterion, since the best observations upon diet are much perplexed by foreign circumstances.

Thirdly, All liquors, which have undergone vinous fermentation, since they obtain thereby an inflammable, inebriating spirit, have from this inebriating quality, which impairs reason, and adds force to the passions, a mark set upon them, as dangerous not only on this account, but on others, to bodily health, &c. and as either totally to be avoided, or not to be used, except in small quantities, and rarely.

The

The general agreeableness of wines and fermented liquors to the taste, their immediate good effects in languors, dejections, and indigestion, and their exhilarating quality, when taken sparingly, are indeed arguments to shew, that there may be a proper use of them. But this seems rather to be that of medicines, or refreshments upon singular occasions than of daily food.

It may perhaps be, that the changes produced in the earth at the deluge did so alter the nature of vegetable juices, as to render them then first capable of producing an inflammable inebriating spirit by fermentation; and that this alteration in the juices of vegetables had a principal share in shortening the life of man; perhaps of other animals, which last might farther contribute to the first. So great an event as the deluge may well be supposed to make a great alteration in all the three kingdoms, mineral, vegetable, and animal. We are sure of the first from natural history, and of the last from the scriptures, which relate the gradual shortening of man's life after the flood. And the account of *Noah's* drunkenness seems to intimate, that it was something new and unexpected. The connection of the three kingdoms with each other is also so great, that we may reasonably infer a change in any one, either as a cause, or as an effect, from finding it in the other two. However, the sin of our common parent *Noah*, and his exposing his nakedness, which also bears some resemblance to the immediate consequence of *Adam's* transgression, ought to make us particularly upon our guard. At the same time several other passages of scripture seem fairly to intimate, that there is an allowable use of wine in the intercourses of human life, as where wine is said to make glad the heart of man, and therefore to be matter of praise; our Saviour's turning water into wine; his blessing it at his last supper, and making it the representative of his blood;



blood; and St. Paul's advice to *Timothy*. But very great caution ought to be used in this point. The inebriating quality of fermented liquors, by disordering the mind, is a strong evidence, that they are also hurtful to the body, both because of the intimate connection between body and mind, and because all the beneficent ends of Providence are answered always by one and the same means, and centre in one and the same point. Whenever therefore we deviate in one respect, we must deviate in all. The abstinence from wine enjoined upon the *Nazarites* at all times, and upon the priests during their ministration, appears to be a strong intimation of the unsuitableness of wine to those who aim at perfection; who would deviate as little as possible from the divine life.

This third rule coincides remarkably with both the first and second. The ill effects of fermented liquors, when indulged in, are evident from experience; and their high flavours are a principal temptation to an immoderate use of them.

Fourthly, With respect to animal diet, let it be considered, that taking away the lives of animals, in order to convert them into food, does great violence to the principles of benevolence and compassion. This appears from the frequent hard-heartedness and cruelty found amongst those persons, whose occupations engage them in destroying animal life, as well as from the uneasiness which others feel in beholding the butchery of animals. It is most evident, in respect of the larger animals, and those with whom mankind have a familiar intercourse, such as oxen, sheep, domestic fowls, &c. so as to distinguish, love, and compassionate individuals. These creatures resemble us greatly in the make of the body in general, and in that of the particular organs of circulation, respiration, digestion, &c. also in the formation of their intellects; memories, and passions, and in the signs  
of

of distress, fear, pain, and death. They often likewise win our affections by the marks of peculiar sagacity, by their instincts, helplessness, innocence, nascent benevolence, &c. And if there be any glimmering of the hope of an hereafter for them, if they should prove to be our brethren and sisters in this higher sense, in immortality as well as mortality, in the permanent principle of our minds, as well as the frail dust of our bodies, if they should be partakers of the same redemption as well as of our fall, and be members of the same mystical body, this would have a particular tendency to increase our tenderness for them. At the same time the present circumstances of things seem to require, that no very great alteration should be made in this matter: we ourselves are under the same law of death, and of becoming food to our fellow-animals; and philosophy has of late discovered such numberless orders of small animals in parts of diet formerly esteemed to be void of life, and such an extension of life into the vegetable kingdom, that we seem under the perpetual necessity, either of destroying the lives of some of the creatures, or of perishing ourselves, and suffering many others to perish. This therefore seems to be no more than an argument to stop us in our career, to make us sparing and tender in this article, and put us upon consulting experience more faithfully and impartially, in order to determine what is most suitable to the purposes of life and health, our compassion being made by the foregoing considerations, in some measure, a balance to our impetuous bodily appetites. At least, abstinence from flesh-meats seems left to each person's choice, and not necessary, unless in peculiar circumstances.

The doctrine of the scriptures on this head appears very agreeable to these dictates of sympathy. For *Noah*, and we in him, received a permission from God to eat flesh; and that this was no more than

than a permission, may be concluded from its not being given to *Adam*, from the shortening of human life after the flood, from the strict command concerning blood, from the *Israelites* being restrained from animal food for forty years during their purification and institution in religion in the wilderness, from the distinction of animals into clean and unclean, from the burning of part in sacrifice, and sometimes the whole, from the practice of many *Jews* and *Christians* particularly eminent for piety, &c. All these may be considered as hints and admonitions to us, as checks and restraints upon unbridled carnal appetites and lusts: at the same time that our Saviour's partaking in meats with all kinds of men, and many express instances and testimonies both in the Old and New Testament, as particularly the command to eat the paschal lamb, and other sacrifices, remove all scruple from those persons who eat with moderation, and in conformity to the rules of piety, benevolence, and the moral sense.

The coincidence of this fourth rule with the first and second appears in the same manner as that of the third with them.

Fifthly, Having laid down these four rules concerning the quality of our aliments, I come next to observe, that the quantity ought scarce ever to be so much as our appetites prompt us to, but, in general, to fall a little short of this. The goodness of this rule is verified by common observation; nay, one may affirm, that small errors in the quality of our diet may be quite rectified by a proper moderation in respect of quantity; whereas a transgression in regard to quantity cannot be compensated by the innocence of the aliment. Such a transgression is, however, more rare, where the quality of the aliment is not improper.

Here

Here it may be asked how it comes to pass, that the appetites should, in some instances, be the best guides to us both in respect of quality and quantity, and in most so to the brute creation; and yet, in other instances, be so greatly apt to mislead us, to hurry us on to pain, diseases, and death, and these not rare and singular ones, but the most frequent and ordinary that occur. Almost every man is tempted by fruits, by wines, natural and artificial flavours, and high relishes, &c. to transgress either in quantity or quality. Now to this we may answer, that in young children the appetites deviate very seldom, and very little, from what is most conducive to the body; and that they would probably deviate less, were children conducted better, were not their tastes and appetites perverted and corrupted by customs and practices derived from our corruptions, or our ignorance. This may, at first sight, seem harsh, in respect of them: but it is at the same time a strong instance and argument, amongst many others, of the intimate connection and sympathy, that unite us all to each other, of our being members of the same mystical body, and of the great system of the world's being a system of benevolence; and thus it concurs to establish the fundamental position of these papers. However, these perversions and corruptions, from whatever cause they arise, seldom grow to a great height, till such time as children arrive at years of discretion in a certain degree, till they get some ideas of fitness, decency, obedience to superiors, and to God, conscience, &c. Now, at first indeed, the child is mere body, as it were; and therefore it is not at all incongruous to suppose, that he may be directed by mere bodily appetites and instincts. But, when the mental faculties are generated, he then becomes a compound of body and mind; and consequently it would be incongruous to suppose him directed in any thing that affects both



body and mind, as diet plainly does, by mere bodily appetites. On the contrary, his rule ought now to be a compound of bodily and mental instincts, inclinations, admonitions, &c. directing, influencing and assisting one another. Let this be so, and the child or man will very seldom deviate from what is most conducive to health and happiness of all kinds. And it is to be observed, that the bodily pains and sufferings, which follow from yielding to mere bodily appetites, in opposition to mental conviction, are one principal means, by which the authority and influence of conscience are established with respect to other branches of desire. And when a person, from these or other motives, reverses his own steps in respect of the pleasures of taste, the irregularity and inordinateness of the bodily appetites decline by the same degrees, as they grew excessive through unlawful gratification. So that, after a person has governed himself, for a considerable time, with strictness, from a sense of duty, he will find little difficulty afterwards. The natural appetites will themselves become the proper substitutes of benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, and direct a man what and how much is requisite.

All this reasoning is confirmed by the observation before made on brutes. They continue mere body, as it were, to the last; and therefore their bodily appetites scarce ever mislead them. And the evil influences which our corrupt practices and customs have upon them, is a farther argument for the relation we all bear to each other. In like manner, all the evil mutual influences in animals, with all their original deviations, are marks and evidences of a fallen and degenerate state, however difficult this may be to be accounted for. They are therefore evidences also of the truth of the scriptures, which not only declare this our degeneracy, and give a general idea of the means by which it  
was

was introduced, but also publish the glorious tidings of our redemption from it.

Sixthly, Since the circumstances of the world are such, as that it is almost impossible for those who do not retire from it, to avoid errors both in the quantity and quality of their diet, there seems a necessity for fasting upon certain occasions. This is a compendious method of reversing our own wrong steps, of preventing the ill effects of excess upon the body and mind, breaking ill habits of this sort at once, and bringing us back, by hasty motions, to the highest degrees of self-government, to which imperfect creatures in this world of temptations can attain. It is therefore a duty, which implies and presupposes the present imperfection and degeneracy of our natures. And yet this duty, harsh as it seems, is probably productive even of sensible pleasure in most instances; since, under due restrictions, it appears to be extremely conducive to health and long life, as well as to the regulation of our passions. It may be true indeed, that constant abstemiousness would be preferable, in these respects, to what is called common moderation, practised upon ordinary occasions, and rectified by fasting upon particular ones. But the due degree of abstemiousness is scarce practicable for a constancy, as I observed just now, to those whose duty engages them to converse freely with the world. Let me add here, that fasting will have much more efficacy towards reducing us to a right course of action, when it is accompanied with such religious exercises, as the practice of good men has joined with it, prayer, self-examination, and works of charity.

Seventhly, Where a person has been so happily educated, as scarce to have transgressed the bounds of strict moderation, either in eating or drinking, and with respect both to quantity and quality, or where he has corrected and brought back himself by due

Q 2

severity,

severity, sufficiently continued, it is better to pay a regard to the foregoing and such like precepts, only to a certain degree, upon occasions of importance, and without scrupulosity and rigour; and, in the small instantaneous occurrences of life, to be directed by the natural appetites, agreeably to the original intention of the author of nature. For anxiety, solicitude, and scrupulosity, are greatly prejudicial to the health both of the body and mind, turn us from our natural and equitable judgment of things, augment selfishness, and disqualify for the practice of the highest duties, good-will to men, and complacence and delight in God. The scripture precept is *to eat and drink to the glory of God*, not with a solicitude about ourselves.

### P R O P. LIII.

*To deduce practical Rules concerning the Commerce between the Sexes.*

THAT benevolence, love, esteem, and the other sympathetic affections, give the chief value, and highest perfection, to the sensible pleasures between the sexes, is sufficiently evident to serious and considerate persons. It appears also, that these pleasures were intended by Providence, as a principal means, whereby we might be enabled to transfer our affection and concern from ourselves to others, and learn first in the single instance of the beloved person, afterwards in those of the common offspring, to sympathize in the pleasures and pains of our neighbours, and to love them as ourselves. It follows therefore, that if this great source of benevolence be corrupted, or perverted to other purposes, the social affections thereon depending will be perverted likewise, and degenerate into selfishness or malevolence. Let us inquire in what manner the strong inclinations of the  
sexes

sexes to each other may be best conducted, so as most to contribute to public and private happiness, so as to obtain the *maximum* of it, both from this quarter, and from the other parts of our nature, which are necessarily connected with it.

First, then, It is evident, that unrestrained promiscuous concubinage would produce the greatest evils, public and private. By being unrestrained, it would destroy the health and the propagation of mankind; by being promiscuous, become ineffectual to promote love, and the tender affections, either between the persons themselves, or towards their offspring, and also raise endless jealousies and quarrels amongst mankind. There has never perhaps been any nation in the world, where this entire licentiousness has been allowed; the mischiefs which evidently follow from all great degrees of it, having always laid mankind under some restraints, and produced some imperfect regulations at least, and some approaches towards marriage. However, the misery and desolation of the barbarous nations of *Africa* and *America*, in whom the violence of passion, and the degeneracy of nature, have almost obliterated the faint traces of the patriarchal religion; and the many evils, public and private, which attend all unlawful commerce between the sexes in the more civilized countries; are abundantly sufficient to evince what is affirmed. The shameful, loathsome, and often fatal disease, which peculiarly attends the vice of lewdness, may be considered as a most unquestionable evidence of the divine will. This disease, with all its consequences, would soon cease amongst mankind, could they be brought under the restraints of lawful marriage; but must ever continue, whilst licentiousness continues. And it is perhaps to this disease that we owe the present tolerable state of things. It may be, that, without this check, the licentiousness, which has always been observed to follow improvements in arts

Q 3

and



and politeness, and to attend upon bodies politic in their declension, and which the corruption of the christian religion in some, and the disbelief of it in others, have, in a manner, authorized, would have brought on utter dissoluteness in this western part of the world, such as would have been inconsistent with the very existence of regular government. Nay, it may be, that this will still be the case, and that we are hastening to our period, through the great wickedness of the world in this respect particularly, though our lives, as a body politic, be somewhat prolonged, by this correction.

Secondly, Pomicuous concubinage being thus evidently excluded, it comes next to be inquired, whether the gospel rule of confining one man to one woman during life, except in the case of the woman's adultery, be calculated to produce the greatest possible good, public and private. And here we must own ourselves utterly unable to form any exact judgment. It is impossible to determine by any computation, which of all the ways, in which marriage has been or may be regulated, is most conducive to happiness upon the whole: this would be too wide a field, and where also we could have no fixed points to guide us: just as, in the matter of civil government, it is impossible for us to determine, what particular form, monarchy, aristocracy, &c. or what mixture of these, is most accommodated to human nature, and the circumstances of things. Here therefore we seem particularly to want a revelation to direct us; and therefore are under a particular obligation to abide by its award. Now revealed religion commands us, in the case of government, to obey those powers that are actually established, of whatever kind they be, leaving that to the children of this world to dispute; and, in respect of marriage, gives a permission to enter into this state to those who find it requisite, and also a farther permission

sion to divorce an adulteress, and marry another woman; but at the same time enjoins the strictest purity in our thoughts, words, and actions; and that not only in all such as respect other persons besides the husband and wife, but in every thing that has a tendency to heighten carnal desire. Now, though it does not appear, that mankind ever did, or ever would, make so strict a rule for themselves; yet this rule, when made, approves itself to our judgments. The strictest purity and watchfulness over ourselves are necessary, in order to make marriage of any kind (which we see by the last article to be itself necessary) happy, and productive of private pleasure and comfort, and of public good, by the united labours of the married pair for themselves, their offspring, and their relatives. In the present imperfect state of things, the forbidding to divorce an adulteress might seem a harsh commandment, above the frailty of our natures, as requiring the most entire love and affection, where there are returns of the greatest contempt and aversion, and the greatest violation of what are called just rights and properties. Now, though the gospel requires perfection of us ultimately, *i. e.* the most entire love in return for the most bitter hatred, and an absolute disregard of all property both for ourselves, and for those whom we make our substitutes after death; yet it makes allowance for human frailty in this eminent instance; leaving it, however, to every man, who is arrived at a sufficient degree of perfection, to walk thereby.

That a greater liberty of divorcing would be less suited to produce good, public and private, upon the whole, appears probable, because no definite rule could be given in respect of other offences, they all admitting of various degrees; and because the prospect of divorcing, or being divorced, would often increase breaches, at the same time that frequent divorces would have the worst consequences in respect

of children, and even approach to promiscuous concubinage; whereas the indissolubility of the marriage bond, with the affection to the common offspring, often produce in both parties the christian virtues of forbearance, and forgiveness to each other. It is not at all improbable, that wicked casuists, who have explained away so many express gospel precepts, would, by the influence of princes and great men, have rendered marriage almost of no effect, by increasing the liberty of divorcing.

Thirdly, The great sinfulness of adultery, fornication, and impurity of every kind, appears not only from the manifest and great evils and miseries of various sorts attending them, the shame, intemperance, jealousies, murders, &c. and from the strictness of the gospel precepts, and the practices of the first christians in this respect; but also because the great sin of idolatry is represented by adultery and fornication in the prophetic writings; and because the most heavy judgments are denounced against these last sins in those writings, when understood both in figurative and literal senses. And indeed, as the idolatrous rites of the heathens were generally accompanied with abominable lewdness, so these vicious pleasures may be considered as one of the grossest kinds of idolatry, as withdrawing our affections from the true object, and fixing them on a mere animal pleasure, on one from the first and lowest class, and as worshipping the heathen deities of *Bacchus* and *Venus*. It is true indeed, that the pursuits of this kind are seldom from the alone view of bodily pleasure, the very nature of our bodies not suffering this, since the law of the body must transfer bodily pleasures upon foreign objects, so as to form intellectual pleasures. But then the intellectual pleasure accompanying these pursuits is always a vicious one, generally that of a vain mischievous ambition, which occasions  
the

the greatest confusion, havock, and distress, in families, and indeed in the whole race of mankind.

Fourthly, It follows from the shame attending these pleasures, the organs, their functions, &c. in all ages and nations, the account of the origin of this shame in the third chapter of *Genesis*, the directions concerning the uncleanness of men and women given in the *Jewish* law, the rite of circumcision, the pains of child-birth; with the account of their origin in the third chapter of *Genesis*, the strictness required in the *Jewish* priests, the abstinence required in others upon sacred occasions, the miraculous conception of Christ, his expressions concerning marrying, and giving in marriage, at the times of the flood, and last judgment, his and St. *Paul's* recommendation of celibacy, the honourable mention of virginity in the *Revelation*, &c. that these pleasures are to be considered as one of the marks of our present fallen degenerate state. The mortality of the present body, introduced by *Adam's* sin, would of course require some such method of propagation as now subsists, though nothing of this kind had taken place before the fall; and therefore it may be, that nothing did, or something greatly different from the present method. And one may deduce from hence, as well as from the parallel observations concerning abstinence in diet, and fasting (for the similiar nature, and reciprocal influence, of the sensible pleasures justifies our inferences here, made either way), also from the sicknesses and infirmities of human life, and particularly from those of women, that great moderation, and frequent abstinence, are requisite. Nay, it even appears, that in many circumstances marriage itself is not to be approved; but rather that men and women, who are advanced to or past the meridian of life, who have a call to offices of religion, charity, &c. who labour under certain hereditary distempers, have relations  
and



and dependents that are necessitous, &c. should endeavour to subdue the body by prayer and fasting. However, great care ought here to be taken not to lay a snare before any one.

If we admit the doctrine of this last paragraph, viz. that these pleasures are only permitted, and that they are marks of our fallen state, we may perhaps be enabled thereby to cast some light upon the scripture history of the *Patriarchs* and *Jews*. We christians who live in the more adult ages of mankind, have stricter precepts, and are obliged to higher degrees of spirituality, as we approach nearer to the spiritual kingdom of Christ; and yet some permissions are suitable to our state. No wonder then, that larger permissions were requisite in the gross, corporeal, infant state of mankind, considered as one individual tending ever from carnality to spirituality, in a manner analogous to that of each person. However, these were only permissions to the *Jews* and *Patriarchs*, not commands. It may perhaps be, that while polygamy subsisted according to permission, the number of women might be greater than that of men. This is indeed mere hypothesis; but such things deserve to be examined, as soon as proper principles are discovered, upon which to proceed. The proportional number of men destroyed by wars in ancient times, appears to be much greater than it is now.

Here it may be asked, If it be requisite in certain persons not to marry at all, and in every one to be abstinent, how can it be said, that this rule of life gives the *maximum* of those pleasures? Now, with respect to those who never marry, at the same time devoting themselves really and earnestly to God, to attend upon him without distraction, it may be observed, that they enjoy the peculiar privilege of being exempted from many of the great cares and sorrows of this life; and that the prophetic blessing, of the  
barren's

barren's having more children than she which hath an husband, is eminently applicable to them. They that marry, must have sorrow in the flesh; and if those who are under the necessity of marrying, because they burn, humble themselves agreeably to this experience of their own weakness, they will find marriage to be a proper clue to lead them through the difficulties and miseries of this life to a better state. But if a person, who is likewise humble, can humbly hope, upon a fair examination, that he is not under this necessity, there is no occasion, that he should take this burden upon him. The benevolent and devout affections, though wanting one source, will, upon the whole, grow fatter from other causes; and if he makes all with whom he has any intercourses, all to whom his desires, prayers, and endeavours, can extend, his spiritual children, still with all humility, and diffidence of himself, their spiritual ultimate happiness, through the infinite mercy of God, will be a fund of joy far superior to any that is, and must be, tinged with the defilements of this world, as that of natural parents cannot but be. As to these, *i. e.* the persons that marry, it is probable, that they approach to the *maximum* of the sensible pleasures much more than the dissolute; and if, in any case, they do, for the sake of religion, forego any part of what is permitted, it cannot be doubted, but this will be repaid with ample interest by spiritual pleasures. But this subject is of too nice and difficult a nature to be farther pursued. Let those who need particular information apply to God for it; and especially let them pray, that they may join christian prudence with christian purity and holiness.

It may also be asked here, if marriage be only permitted, and celibacy preferable in the christian sense of things, what becomes of the propagation and increase of mankind, which seem to have a necessary connection with the greatest public good? I answer, that

that this kind of cares is far above us, and therefore foreign to our proper business; whereas the precept, or admonition rather, to those who can receive it, is plain, and stands upon the authority of the christian revelation itself, and of the other natural signatures of the divine will before-mentioned. I answer also, that this world is a ruined world; that it must be destroyed by fire, as *Sodom* was, perhaps on account of our great corruption in this respect; so that its perfection in this state of things is impossible, and therefore no end for us, though its correction and melioration be, as far as we have opportunity; that this admonition cannot be received by all; and therefore that the few, by whom alone it can be received, may contribute more to the increase of mankind by their promoting virtue, and restraining vice, than any posterity of theirs could do; and lastly, that, if it could be observed by all, we should all be near to christian perfection, *i. e.* to the glorious kingdom of Christ, and the new state of things. Observations of the same kind may be made upon all the other gospel precepts. If these be kept in their utmost purity by a few only, they seem to promote even temporal happiness upon the whole; and this appears to be the truth of the case, the real fact, since no directions or exhortations can extend to, and prevail with, more than a few, in comparison of the bulk of mankind, however good and earnest they may be. If all could be influenced at once, it would be still infinitely preferable, because this would be *life from the dead*, and *the kingdom of righteousness*. But this seems impossible. We need not therefore fear any intermediate degree. The more christian purity and perfection prevail, the better must it be on all real accounts, whatever becomes of trade, arts, grandeur, &c.

Lastly, I cannot dismiss this subject without making some remarks upon education. The desires  
between

between the sexes are far more violent than any others; the final cause of which is by writers very justly said to be, that men and women may be compelled as it were, to undertake the necessary cares and labours, that attend the married pair, in providing for themselves, and their offspring. But there is reason to believe from other parallel cases, that these desires are not originally much disproportionate to the end; and that, if due care was taken, they would not arise in youth much before the proper time to set about this end, before the bodies of the sexes were mature, able to endure labour and fatigue, and the woman to undergo child-birth, with its consequences, of nursing the infant, &c. and their minds ripe for the cares and foresight required in family affairs. Something of this kind would probably happen, whatever care the parents took of the bodies and minds of their children, on account of our fallen degenerate state, our state of trial, which appears in all our other bodily appetites, and intellectual desires. But the violence and unseasonableness of these passions are so manifest in the generality of young persons, that one cannot but conclude the general education of youth to be grossly erroneous and perverted. And this will appear very evident in fact upon examination. The diet of children, and young persons, is not sufficiently plain and sparing; which would at the same time lay a better foundation for health, and freedom from diseases, and put some check upon these passions. They are brought up in effeminacy, and neglect of bodily labour, which would prepare both body and mind for care and sorrow, and keep down carnal desire. The due culture of the mind, especially in respect of religion, is almost universally neglected; so that they are unfit for business, left exposed to temptations through idleness, and want of employment, and are destitute of the chief armour, that of religious motives, whereby to oppose temptation.

Lastly,



Lastly, the conversation which they hear, and the books which they read, lewd heathen poets, modern plays, romances, &c. are so corrupt in this respect, that it is matter of astonishment, how a parent, who has any degree of seriousness (I will not say religion) himself, or concern for his child, can avoid seeing the immediate destructive consequences, or think that any considerations, relating to this world, can be a balance to these.

#### P R O P. LIV.

*To deduce practical Rules concerning the Hardships, Pains, and Uneasinesses, that occur in the daily Inter-courses of Life.*

I HAVE already observed in general, *Prop. 51. Cor.* that a regard to the precepts of benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, affords us the best prospect for avoiding and lessening these. I will now exemplify and apply this doctrine more particularly.

First, then, It is evident, that luxury, self-indulgence, and an indolent aversion to perform the duties of a man's station, do not only bring on gross bodily diseases; but also, previously to this, are often apt to lead men into such a degree of solicitude, anxiety, and fearfulness, in minute affairs, as to make them inflict upon themselves greater torments, than the most cruel tyrant could invent. The complaints, which are usually styled nervous, are peculiarly apt to infest this class of persons; and I need not say to those, who either have themselves experienced them, or attended to them in others, of how grievous a nature they are. Now, though something is to be allowed here to natural constitution, and hereditary tendencies, also to the great injuries sometimes done to the nervous system by profuse evacuations, and violent distempers, in consequence where-  
of

of it may be proper and necessary in certain cases to administer such medicines, as are suitable to the particular symptoms, and temporary exigencies; yet there seems to be no way so probable of getting out of this self-tormenting state, this labyrinth of error and anxiety, as by prayer and resignation to God, by charity, and taking upon one's self the cares and fears of others according to our rank and station in life, easing our own burden thereby, and by constant, laborious, bodily exercise, such particularly as occurs in the faithful discharge of duty, with great moderation in the sensible pleasures. Could the unhappy persons of this sort be prevailed upon to enter on such a course with courage and steadiness, notwithstanding the pains, difficulties, and uneasinesses, which would attend it at first, all would generally begin to clear up even in respect of this world, so as that they would regain some tolerable degrees of health, serenity, and even cheerfulness.

Secondly, Human life is in so imperfect and disorderly a state, on account of the fall, that it is impossible to avoid all excesses, and hardships from heat, cold, hunger, accidents, &c. But then these may be rendered harmless and easy to a great degree, by accustoming the body to them; which the constant and faithful discharge of duty by each person, in particular does, in respect of those excesses and hardships, that are most likely to befall *him*.

Thirdly, External injuries fall much to the share of the imprudent. Now prudence is a virtue, *i. e.* a dictate of the moral sense, and a command from God; and imprudence, agreeably hereto, the manifest offspring of some vicious passion or other, for the most part.

Fourthly, Bodily pains are often inflicted by men, either in the way of public authority, or of private resentment and malice. But it is very evident, that the

the benevolent must fare better in this respect, than the malevolent and mischievous.

Fifthly, Whatever evils befall a man, religion, and the belief of a happy futurity, enable him to support himself under them much better than he could otherwise do. The true christian not only ought, but is also able, for the most part, to *rejoice in tribulation*. And this is the genuine, ultimate, and indeed only perfect solution of all difficulties relating to the pleasures and pains, both sensible and intellectual. For, though it be certain, that a benevolent and pious man has the fairest prospect for obtaining sensible pleasure, and avoiding sensible pain, in general, and upon a fair balance; also that the more wicked any one is, the less pleasure, and more pain, must he expect; yet still it will often happen, that a person is obliged from a sense of duty, from benevolence, adherence to true religion, the dictates of conscience, or a gospel precept to forego pleasures, or endure pains, where there is no probability, that a recompence will be made during this life; and sometimes it is required of a man even to seal his testimony with his blood. Now, in these cases, rational self-interest has nothing left, which can satisfy its demands, besides the hope and expectation of a happy futurity; but the present pleasure, which these afford, is some earnest of the thing hoped and expected; it is also, in certain cases, so great, as to overpower, and almost annihilate, the opposite pains.

Here let it be observed, that as this frail corruptible body must at last return to its original dust, and lose its power of conveying pleasure to us, which it does gradually for a long time before death from mere old age; so it is natural to expect, that the *maximum* of its pleasures should not always be attained, even by that which is the genuine rule of life. For death is a mark of our present fallen state; and therefore

therefore we may have this farther mark also, that the true rule, which, in a paradisiacal state, would have carried every thing in its order to perfection, will now do it only in the general; shewing us, first, by its being very general, that it is the true rule; and secondly, by its not being universal that we have deviated from our original make.

It may not be amiss to add a few words here concerning sleep. The analogy taken from the foregoing rules teaches, that we ought not to indulge in this to the utmost, but to break it off a little before the natural inclination thereto totally expires. And this position is remarkably confirmed both by the many advantages to body and mind, which result from rising early; and by the scripture precepts concerning *watching*; which, as appears to me, ought to be taken as well in their strictly literal sense upon proper occasions, as in their more distant and figurative one.



## S E C T. III.

OF THE REGARD DUE TO THE PLEASURES  
AND PAINS OF IMAGINATION IN FORM-  
ING THE RULE OF LIFE.

## P R O P. LV.

*The Pleasures of Imagination ought not to be made a  
primary Pursuit.*

FOR, First, It does not appear that those who devote themselves to the study of the polite arts, or of science, or to any other pleasure of mere imagination, as their chief end and pursuit, attain to a greater degree of happiness than the rest of the world. The frequent repetition of these pleasures cloy, as in other cases : and though the whole circle of them is so extensive, as that it might, in some measure, obviate this objection ; yet the human fancy is too narrow to take in this whole circle, and the greatest virtuosos do, in fact, seldom apply themselves to more than one or two considerable branches.—The ways in which the pleasures of beauty are usually generated, and transferred upon the several objects, are often opposite to, and inconsistent with, one another ; so as to mix deformity with beauty, and to occasion an unpleasing discordancy of opinion, not only in different persons, but even in the same. This is evident from the foregoing history of these pleasures, and of their derivation from arbitrary and accidental associations, as well as from the observation of the fact in real life. And it is not uncommon to see men, after a long and immoderate pursuit of one class of beauty, natural or artificial, deviate into such by-paths

by-paths and singularities, as that the objects excite pain rather than pleasure; their limits for excellence and perfection being narrow, and their rules absurd; and all that falls short of these, being condemned by them, as deformed and monstrous.—Eminent votaries of this kind are generally remarkable for ignorance and imprudence in common necessary affairs; and thus they are exposed to much ridicule and contempt, as well as to other great inconveniences.—The same persons are peculiarly liable to vanity, self-conceit, censoriousness, moroseness, jealousy, and envy; which surely are very uneasy companions in a man's own breast, as well as the occasions of many insults and harms from abroad. And I think I may add, that scepticism in religious matters is also a frequent attendant here; which, if it could be supposed free from danger as to futurity, is at least very uncomfortable as to the present. For as the extravagant encomiums bestowed upon works of taste and genius beget a more than ordinary degree of self-conceit in the virtuoso, so this self-conceit, this superiority which he fancies he has over the rest of the world in one branch of knowledge, is by himself often supposed to extend to the rest, in which yet it is probable that he is uncommonly ignorant through want of application: and thus he becomes either dogmatical or sceptical; the first of which qualities, though seemingly opposite to the last, is, in reality, nearly related to it. And, as the sympathetic and theopathic affections are peculiarly necessary for understanding matters of a religious nature aright, no kind or degree of learning being sufficient for this purpose without these, if the pursuit of literature, or science, be so strong, as to stifle and suppress the growth of these, or to distort them, religion, which cannot be reconciled to such a temper, will probably be treated as incomprehensible, absurd, uncertain, or incredible.—However, it is difficult to represent

R 2

justly,

justly, in any of the respects here mentioned, what is the genuine consequence of the mere pursuit of the pleasures of imagination, their votaries being also, for the most part, extremely over-run with the gross vice of ambition, as was just now observed. But then this does not invalidate any of the foregoing objections, as will be seen when we come to consider that vice in the next section.

Secondly, It is evident, that the pleasures of imagination were not intended for our primary pursuit, because they are, in general, the first of our intellectual pleasures, which are generated from the sensible ones by association, come to their height early in life, and decline in old age. There are indeed some few persons, who continue devoted to them during life; but there are also some, who remain sensualists to the last; which singularities are, however, in neither case, arguments of the design of Providence, that it should be so. And, in general, we may reason here, as we did above, in deducing the inferior value of the sensible pleasures from their being the lowest class. The pleasures of imagination are the next remove above the sensible ones, and have, in their proper place and degree, a great efficacy in improving and perfecting our natures. They are to men in the early part of their adult age, what playthings are to children; they teach them a love for regularity, exactness, truth, simplicity; they lead them to the knowledge of many important truths relating to themselves, the external world, and its author; they habituate to invent, and reason by analogy and induction; and when the social, moral, and religious affections begin to be generated in us, we may make a much quicker progress towards the perfection of our natures by having a due stock, and no more than a due stock, of knowledge, in natural and artificial things, of a relish for natural and artificial beauty. It deserves particular notice here, that  
the

the language used in respect of the ideas, pleasures, and pains of imagination, is applicable to those of the moral sense with a peculiar fitness and significancy; as *vice versa*, the proper language of the moral sense does, in many cases, add great beauty to poetry, oratory, &c. when used catachrestically. And we may observe in general, that as the pleasures of imagination are manifestly intended to generate and augment the higher orders, particularly those of sympathy, theopathy, and the moral sense; so these last may be made to improve and perfect those, as I shall now endeavour to shew under the proposition that follows.

### P R O P. LVI.

*The Pursuit of the Pleasures of Imagination ought to be regulated by the Precepts of Benevolence, Piety, and the Moral Sense.*

FOR, First, Those parts of the arts and sciences which bring glory to God, and advantage to mankind, which inspire devotion, and instruct us how to be useful to others, abound with more and greater beauties, than such as are profane, mischievous, unprofitable, or minute. Thus the study of the scriptures, of natural history, and natural philosophy, of the frame of the human mind, &c. when undertaken and pursued with benevolent and pious intentions, leads to more elegant problems, and surprising discoveries, than any study intended for mere private amusement.

Secondly, It may be considered as a reason for this, that since this world is a system of benevolence, and consequently its author the object of unbounded love and adoration, benevolence and piety are the only true guides in our inquiries into it, the only keys which will unlock the mysteries of nature, and clues which lead through her labyrinths. Of this



all branches of natural history, and natural philosophy, afford abundant instances; and the same thing may be said of civil history, when illustrated and cleared by the scriptures, so as to open to view the successive dispensations of God to mankind; but it has been more particularly taken notice of in the frame of the human body, and in the symptoms and tendencies of distempers. In all these matters let the inquirer take it for granted previously, that every thing is right, and the best that it can be, *cæteris manentibus*, i. e. let him, with a pious confidence, seek for benevolent purposes; and he will be, always directed to the right road, and, after a due continuance in it, attain to some new and valuable truth; whereas every other principle and motive of examination, being foreign to the great plan, upon which the universe is constructed, must lead into endless mazes, errors, and perplexities.

Thirdly, It may be considered as a farther reason of the same thing, that benevolence and piety, and, by consequence, their offspring, the moral sense, are the only things which can give a genuine and permanent lustre to the truths that are discovered. A man with the most perfect comprehension, that his faculties will allow, of that infinite profusion of good which overflows the whole creation, and of all the fountains and conduits of it, and yet having no share of the original source from whence all these were derived, having no pittance or ray of the inexhaustible benevolence of the great Creator, no love for that boundless ocean of love, or sense of duty to him, would be no more happy, than an accomptant is rich by reckoning up millions, or a miser by possessing them.

Fourthly, It may be remarked, that the pleasures of imagination point to devotion in a particular manner by their unlimited nature. For all beauty, both natural and artificial, begins to fade and languish

guish after a short acquaintance with it: novelty is a never failing requisite: we look down, with indifference and contempt, upon what we comprehend easily; and are ever aiming at, and pursuing, such objects as are but just within the compass of our present faculties. What is it now that we ought to learn from this dissatisfaction to look behind us, and tendency to press forward; from this endless grasping after infinity? Is it not, that the infinite Author of all things has so formed our faculties, that nothing less than himself can be an adequate object for them? That it is in vain to hope for full and lasting satisfaction from any thing finite, however great and glorious, since it will itself teach us to conceive and desire something still more so? That, as nothing can give us more than a transitory delight, if its relation to God be excluded; so every thing, when considered as the production of his infinite wisdom and goodness, will gratify our utmost expectations, since we may, in this view, see that every thing has infinite uses and excellencies? There is not an atom perhaps in the whole universe, which does not abound with millions of worlds; and, conversely, this great system of the sun, planets, and fixed stars, may be no more than a single constituent particle of some body of an immense relative magnitude, &c. In like manner, there is not a moment of time so small, but it may include millions of ages in the estimation of some beings; and, conversely, the largest cycle which human art is able to invent, may be no more than the twinkling of an eye in that of others, &c. The infinite divisibility and extent of space and time admit of such infinities upon infinities, ascending and descending, as make the imagination giddy, when it attempts to survey them. But, however this be, we may be sure, that the true system of things is infinitely more transcendent in greatness and goodness, than any description or conception of ours can

make it; and that the voice of nature is an universal chorus of joy and transport, in which the least and vilest, according to common estimation, bear a proper part, as well as those whose present superiority over them appears indefinitely great, and may bear an equal one in the true and ultimate ratio of things. And thus the consideration of God gives a relish and lustre to speculations, which are otherwise dry and unsatisfactory, or which perhaps would confound and terrify. Thus we may learn to rejoice in every thing we see, in the blessings past, present, and future; which we receive either in our own persons, or in those of others; to become partakers of the divine nature, loving and lovely, holy and happy.

#### P R O P. LVII.

*To deduce practical Rules concerning the Elegancies and Amusements of Life.*

By the elegancies of life I mean the artificial beauties of houses, gardens, furniture, dress, &c. which are so much studied in high life. There is in these, as in all other things, a certain middle point, which coincides with our duty, and our happiness; whilst all great deviations from it incur the censure of viciousness, or, at least, of unsuitableness and absurdity. But it is not easy to determine this point exactly, in the several circumstances of each particular person. I will here set down the principal reasons against an excess on each hand, leaving it to every person to judge for himself how far they hold in his own particular circumstances.

We may then urge against the immoderate pursuit of the elegancies of life;

First, That vanity, ostentation, and the unlawful pleasures of property, of calling things our own, are almost

almost inseparable from the pursuit of these elegancies, and often engross all to themselves.

Secondly, That the profusion of expence requisite here is inconsistent with the charity due to those, that are afflicted in mind, body, and estate.

Thirdly, That the beauties of nature are far superior to all artificial ones, *Solomon in all his glory not being arrayed like a lily of the field*; that they are open to every one, and therefore rather restrain than feed the desire of property; and that they lead to humility, devotion, and the study of the ways of Providence. We ought therefore much rather to apply ourselves to the contemplation of natural than of artificial beauty.

Fourthly, Even the beauties of nature are much chequered with irregularities and deformities, this world being only the ruins of a paradisiacal one. We must not therefore expect entire order and perfection in it, till we have passed through the gate of death, and are arrived at our second paradisiacal state, till the heavens and earth, and all things in them, be made anew. How much less then can we hope for perfection in the works of human art! And yet, if we seriously apply ourselves to these, we shall be very apt to flatter ourselves with such false hopes, and to forget *that* heavenly country, the desire and expectation of whose glories and beauties can alone carry us through the present wilderness with any degree of comfort and joy.

But then, on the contrary, that some attention may lawfully, and even ought to be paid to artificial beauty, will appear from the following reasons.

First, Convenience and utility are certainly lawful ends; nay, we are even sent hither to promote these publicly and privately. But these coincide, for the most part, with, and are promoted by, simplicity, neatness, regularity, and justness of proportion, *i. e.* with some of the sources of artificial beauty; though  
not



not with all; such as grandeur, profuse variety, accumulation of natural beauties and lustres, and sumptuousness.

Secondly, The study of artificial beauty draws us off from the gross sensual pleasures; refines and spiritualizes our desires; and, when duly limited, teaches us to transfer and apply our ideas of simplicity, uniformity, and justness of proportion, to the heart and affections.

Thirdly, It is necessary for us in this degenerate state, and world of temptations, to be occupied in innocent pursuits, lest we fall into such as are mischievous and sinful. It is therefore, in its proper place and degree, as great charity to mankind to employ the poor in improving and ornamenting external things, rewarding them generously and prudently for their labours, as to give alms; and as useful to the rich to be employed in contriving and conducting such designs at certain times, as to read, meditate, or pray, at others. Our natures are too feeble to be always strained to the pitch of an active devotion or charity, so that we must be content at some intervals to take up with engagements that are merely innocent, sitting loose to them, and pursuing them without eagerness and intention of mind. However, let it be well observed, that there are very few upon whom this third reason for the pursuit of artificial beauty need be inculcated; and that I presume not at all to interfere with those holy persons, who find themselves able to devote all their talents, their whole time, fortunes, bodily and mental abilities, &c. to the great Author of all, in a direct and immediate manner.

Now these and such like reasons, for and against the pursuit of the elegancies of life, hold in various degrees according to the several circumstances of particular persons; and it will not be difficult for those who sit loose to the world, and its vanities,  
to

to balance them against one another in each case, so as to approach nearly to that *medium*, wherein our duty and happiness coincide.

The practice of playing at games of chance and skill is one of the principal amusements of life; and it may be thought hard to condemn it as absolutely unlawful, since there are particular cases of persons infirm in body or mind, where it seems requisite to draw them out of themselves, by a variety of ideas and ends in view, which gently engage the attention. But this reason takes place in very few instances. The general motives to play are avarice, joined with a fraudulent intention, explicit or implicit, ostentation of skill, and spleen through the want of some serious, useful occupation. And as this practice arises from such corrupt sources, so it has a tendency to increase them; and indeed may be considered as an express method of begetting and inculcating self-interest, ill-will, envy, &c. For by gaming a man learns to pursue his own interest solely and explicitly, and to rejoice at the loss of others, as his own gain; grieve at their gain, as his own loss; thus entirely reversing the order established by Providence for social creatures, in which the advantage of one meets in the same point as the advantage of another, and their disadvantage likewise. Let the loss of time, health, fortune, reputation, serenity of temper, &c. be considered also.

#### PROP. LVIII.

*To deduce practical Rules concerning Mirth, Wit, and Humour.*

HERE it is necessary,

First, To avoid all such mirth, wit, and humour, as has any mixture of profaneness in it, *i. e.* all such as lessens our reverence to God, and religious subjects;

subjects; aggrieves our neighbour; or excites corrupt and impure inclinations in ourselves. Since then it appears from the history of wit and humour, given in the foregoing part of this work, that the greatest part of what passes under these names, and that which strikes us most, has a sinful tendency, it is necessary to be extremely moderate and cautious in our mirth, and in our attention to, and endeavours after, wit and humour.

Secondly, Let us suppose the mirth to be innocent, and kept within due bounds; still the frequent returns of it beget a levity and dissipation of mind, that are by no means consistent with that seriousness and watchfulness which are required in christians, surrounded with temptations, and yet aiming at purity and perfection; in strangers and pilgrims, who ought to have the uncertain time of their departure hence always in view. We may add, that wit and humour, by arising, for the most part, from fictitious contrasts and coincidences, disqualify the mind for the pursuit after truth, and attending to the useful practical relations of things, as has already been observed in the history of them; and that the state of the brain which accompanies mirth cannot subsist long, or return frequently, without injuring it; but must, from the very frame of our natures, end at last in the opposite state of sorrow, dejection, and horror.

Thirdly, There is, for the most part, great vain-glory and ostentation in all attempts after wit and humour. Men of wit seek to be admired and caressed by others for the poignancy, delicacy, brilliancy, of their sayings, hints, and repartees; and are perpetually racking their inventions from this desire of applause. Now, as so sinful a motive must defile all that proceeds from it, so the straining our faculties to an unnatural pitch is inconsistent with that ease and equality in conversation, which our social nature, and a mutual desire to please, and be pleased require.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, A due attention being previously paid to the foregoing and such like cautions, it seems not only allowable, but even requisite, to endeavour at a state of perpetual cheerfulness, and to allow ourselves to be amused and diverted by the modest, innocent pleasantries of our friends and acquaintance, contributing also ourselves thereto, as far as is easy and natural to us. This temper of mind flows from benevolence and sociality, and in its turn begets them; it relieves the mind, and qualifies us for the discharge of serious and afflicting duties, when the order of Providence lays them upon us; is a mark of uprightness and indifference to the world, this infantine gaiety of heart being most observable in those who look upon all that the world offers as mere toys and amusements; and it helps to correct, in ourselves and others, many little follies and absurdities, which, though they scarce deserve a severer chastisement, yet ought not to be overlooked entirely.

#### P R O P. LIX.

*To deduce practical Rules concerning the Pursuit of the polite Arts; and particularly of Music, Painting, and Poetry.*

I WILL here enumerate the principal ways in which the three sister arts of music, painting, and poetry, contribute either to corrupt or improve our minds; as it will thence appear in what manner, and to what degree, they are allowable, or even commendable, and in what cases to be condemned as the vanities and sinful pleasures of the world, abjured by all sincere christians.

First, then, It is evident, that most kinds of music, painting, and poetry, have close connections with vice, particularly with the vices of intemperance and lewdness; that they represent them in gay,  
pleasing



pleasing colours, or, at least, take off from the abhorrence due to them; that they cannot be enjoyed without *evil communications*, and concurrence in the pagan shew and pomp of the world; and that they introduce a frame of mind, quite opposite to that of devotion, and earnest concern for our own and other's future welfare. This is evident of public diversions, collections of pictures, academies for painting, statuary, &c, ancient heathen poetry, modern poetry of most kinds, plays, romances, &c. If there be any who doubt of this, it must be from the want of a duly serious frame of mind.

Secondly, A person cannot acquire any great skill in these arts, either as a critic or a master of them, without a great consumption of time: they are very apt to excite vanity, self-conceit, and mutual flatteries, in their votaries; and, in many cases, the expence of fortunes is too considerable to be reconciled to the charity and beneficence due to the indigent.

Thirdly, All these arts are capable of being devoted to the immediate service of God and religion in an eminent manner; and, when so devoted, they not only improve and exalt the mind, but are themselves improved and exalted to a much higher degree, than when employed upon profane subjects; the dignity and importance of the ideas and scenes drawn from religion adding a peculiar force and lustre thereto. And, upon the whole, it will follow, that the polite arts are scarce to be allowed, except when consecrated to religious purposes; but that here their cultivation may be made an excellent means of awakening and alarming our affections, and transferring them upon their true objects.

## PROP. LX.

*To deduce practical Rules concerning the Pursuit of Science.*

By the pursuit of science I here mean the investigation of such truths, as offer themselves in the study of the several branches of knowledge enumerated in the first part of this work; philology, mathematics, logic, history civil and natural, natural philosophy, and theology, or divine philosophy. Now here we may observe,

First, That though the pursuit of truth be an entertainment and employment suitable to our rational natures, and a duty to him who is the *fountain of all knowledge and truth*, yet we must make frequent intervals and interruptions; else the study of science, without a view to God and our duty, and from a vain desire of applause, will get possession of our hearts, engross them wholly, and by taking deeper root than the pursuit of vain amusements, become in the end a much more dangerous and obstinate evil than that. Nothing can easily exceed the vain-glory, self-conceit, arrogance, emulation, and envy, that are found in the eminent professors of the sciences, mathematics, natural philosophy, and even divinity itself. Temperance in these studies is therefore evidently required, both in order to check the rise of such ill passions, and to give room for the cultivation of other essential parts of our natures. It is with these pleasures as with the sensible ones; our appetites must not be made the measure of our indulgences; but we ought to refer all to an higher rule.

Secondly, When the pursuit of truth is directed by this higher rule, and entered upon with a view to the glory of God, and the good of mankind, there

there is no employment more worthy of our natures, or more conducive to their purification and perfection. These are the *wise*, who in the *time of the end shall understand*, and make an *increase of knowledge*; who, by studying and comparing together, the word and works of God, shall be enabled to illustrate and explain both; and who, *by turning many to righteousness, shall themselves shine as the stars for ever and ever*.

But we are not to confine this blessing to those who are called *learned men*, in the usual sense of this word. Devotion, charity, prayer, have a wonderful influence upon those who read the scriptures, and contemplate the works of creation, with a practical intention; and enable persons otherwise illiterate, not only to see and feel the important truths therein manifested, for their own private purposes, but to preach and inculcate them upon others with singular efficacy and success.

#### P R O P. LXI.

*To deduce practical Rules concerning the Ignorance, Difficulties, and Perplexities, in which we find ourselves involved.*

THESE are pains, which ought to be referred to the head of imagination, as above noted; and which therefore require to be considered here. But it must also be observed, that self-interest has no small share in increasing these pains; our ignorance and perplexity occasioning the most exquisite uneasiness to us in those instances, where our future happiness and misery are at stake. Thus, in the difficulties which attend our inquiries into the origin of evil, free-will, the nature of our future existence, the degree and duration of future punishment, and the moral attributes of God, our uneasiness arises not only

only from the darkness which surrounds these subjects, and the jarring of our conclusions, but from the great importance of these conclusions. The following practical rules deserve our attention.

First, To avoid all wrangling and contention, all bitterness and censoriousness, in speaking or writing upon these subjects. This is a rule which ought to extend to all debates and inquiries upon every subject; but it is more peculiarly requisite to be attended to in difficult ones of a religious nature; inasmuch as these ill dispositions of mind are most unsuitable to religion, and yet most apt to arise in abstruse and high speculations; also as they increase the pains considered in this proposition by being of a nature nearly related to them, *i. e.* by being attended with a nearly related state of the brain.

Secondly, We ought to lay it down as certain, that this perplexity and uneasiness commenced with the fall, with the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and that it can never be entirely removed till our readmission to paradise, and to the tree whose leaves are for *the healing of the nations*. We must expect therefore, that, though humble and pious inquiries will always be attended with some success and illumination, still much darkness and ignorance will remain. And the expectation of this will contribute to make us easy under it.

Thirdly, The scriptures give us reason to hope, that this, as well as the rest of our evils, will be removed in a future state. We may therefore, if we labour to secure our happiness in a future state, enjoy, as it were by anticipation, this important part of it, that we shall then *see God and live, see him, though he be invisible, see him as he is, and know as we are known*.

Lastly, Of whatever kind or degree our perplexity be, an implicit confidence in the infinite power, knowledge, and goodness of God, which are



manifested, both in his word and works, in so great a variety of ways, is a certain refuge. If our ideas of the divine attributes be sufficiently strong and practical, their greatness and gloriousness, and the joy arising from them, will overpower any gloominess or dissatisfaction, which a narrow and partial view of things may excite in us.

## S E C T. IV.

OF THE REGARD DUE TO THE PLEASURES OF  
HONOUR, AND THE PAINS OF SHAME, IN FORM-  
ING THE RULE OF LIFE.

## P R O P. LXII.

*The Pleasures of Honour ought not to be made a primary Pursuit.*

THIS may appear from the following considerations.

First, Because an eager desire of, and endeavour after, the pleasures of honour, has a manifest tendency to disappoint itself. The merit of actions, *i. e.* that property of them for which they are extolled, and the agents loved and esteemed, is, that they proceed from benevolence, or some religious or moral consideration; whereas, if the desire of praise be only in part the motive, we rather censure than commend. But, if praise be supposed the greatest good, the desire of it will prevail above the other desires, and the person will by degrees be led on to vanity, self-conceit, and pride, vices that are most contemptible in the sight of all. *For whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.*

Secondly, What shall be the matter of the encomiums, if praise be the supreme good of the species? What is there, to which all can attain, and which all shall agree to commend and value? Not external advantages, such as riches, beauty, strength, &c. These are neither in the power of all, nor universally commended. Not great talents, wit, sagacity,

city, memory, invention. These, though more the subject of encomiums, yet fall to the lot of very few only. In short, virtue alone is both universally esteemed, and in the power of all, who are sufficiently desirous to attain it. But virtue cannot consist with the pursuit of praise, much less with its being made a primary pursuit. It follows therefore, that it ought not to be made such.

Thirdly, If it be said, that those who enjoy great external advantages, or are blest with happy talents, may perhaps pursue praise with success; I answer, that the numberless competitions and superiorities of others, follies and infirmities of a man's self, mistakes and jealousies of those from whom he expects praise, make this quite impossible in general. Nay, it is evident from the very nature of praise, which supposes something extraordinary in the thing praised, that it cannot be the lot of many. So that he who pursues it, must either have a very good opinion of himself, which is a dangerous circumstance in a seeker of praise, or allow that there are many chances against him.

Fourthly, If we recollect the history of these pleasures delivered above, we shall see, that though children are pleased with encomiums upon any advantageous circumstances that relate to them, yet this wears off by degrees; and, as we advance in life, we learn more and more to confine our pleasures of this kind to things in our power (according to the common acceptation of these words), and to virtue. In like manner, the judicious part of mankind, *i. e.* those whose praise is most valued, give it not except to virtue. Here then, again, is a most manifest subserviency of these pleasures to virtue. They not only tell us, that they are not our primary pursuit, or ultimate end, but also shew us what is.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, The early rise of these pleasures, and their declension in old age, for the most part, are arguments to the same purpose, and may be illustrated by the similar observations made on the pleasures of sensation and imagination, being not so obvious here as there.

Sixthly, There is something extremely absurd and ridiculous in supposing a person to be perpetually feasting his own mind with, and dwelling upon, the praises that already are, or which he hopes will hereafter be, given to him. And yet, unless a man does this, which besides would evidently incapacitate him for deserving or obtaining praise, how can he fill up a thousandth part of his time with the pleasures of ambition?

Seventhly, Men that are much commended, presently think themselves above the level of the rest of the world; and it is evident, that praise from inferiors wants much of that high relish, which ambitious men expect, or even that it disgusts. It is even uneasy and painful to a man to hear himself commended, though he may think it his due, by a person that is not qualified to judge. And, in this view of things, a truly philosophic and religious mind sees presently, that all the praises of all mankind are very trivial and insipid.

Eighthly, As the desire of praise carries us perpetually from less to larger circles of applauders, at greater distances of time and place, so it necessarily inspires us with an eager hope of a future life; and this hope alone is a considerable presumption in favour of the thing hoped for. Now it will appear from numberless arguments, some of which are mentioned in these papers, that every evidence for a future life is also an evidence in favour of virtue, and of its superior excellence as the end of life; and *vice versa*. The pleasures of ambition lead therefore, in this way also, from themselves, since they



lead to those of virtue. Let it be considered farther, that all reflections upon a future life, the new scenes which will be unfolded there, and the discovery which will then be made of *the secrets of all hearts*, must cast a great damp upon every ambition, but a virtuous one; and beget great diffidence even in those, who have the best testimony from their consciences.

### P R O P. LXIII.

*The Pleasures of Honour may be obtained in their greatest Degree, and highest Perfection, by paying a strict Regard to the Precepts of Benevolence, Piety, and the moral Sense.*

THIS appears, in part, from what has been delivered under the last proposition; but it may be farther confirmed by the following remarks.

First, Benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, engage men to obtain all such qualifications, and to perform all such actions, as are truly honourable. They preserve them also from that ostentation in respect both of these and other things, which would render them ridiculous and contemptible. Indeed honour is affixed by the bulk of mankind, after some experience of men and things, chiefly to acts of generosity, compassion, public spirit, &c. *i. e.* to acts of benevolence, and the encomiums bestowed upon such acts are one of the principal sources of the moral sense. The *maximum* of honour must therefore coincide with benevolence, and the moral sense, and consequently with piety also, which is closely connected with them.

It may be objected here, that acts of direct piety are not, in general, honourable in this profane world; but, on the contrary, that they expose to the charges  
of

of enthusiasm, superstition, and folly; and this not only from the grossly vicious, but, in some cases, even from the bulk of mankind. And it must be allowed, that some deductions ought to be made on this account, but then let it be considered, that it is impossible to obtain the applauses both of the good and the bad; that, as those of the last scarce afford pleasure to any, so their censure need not be feared; and that such persons as are truly devout, as regard God in all their actions, and men only in subordination to him, are not affected by the contempt and reproaches of the world; but, on the contrary, *rejoice when men revile them; and speak all manner of evil against them falsely, for the sake of Christ.* Let it be observed farther, that humility is the principal of all the qualifications which recommend men to the world; and that it is difficult, or even impossible, to attain this great virtue without piety, without a high veneration for the infinite majesty of God, and a deep sense of our own nothingness and vileness in his sight; so that, in an indirect way, piety may be said to contribute eminently to obtain the good opinion of the world.

Secondly, It is plain from the above delivered history of honour, as paid to external advantages, to bodily, intellectual, and moral accomplishments, that happiness of some kind or other, accruing to a man's self, or to the world by his means, is the source of all honour, immediately or mediately. He therefore who is most happy in himself, and most the cause of happiness to others, must in the end, from the very law of our natures, have the greatest quantity of honourable associations transferred upon him. But we have already shewn in part, and shall shew completely in the progress of this chapter, that benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, are the only true, lasting foundations of private happiness; and that the public happiness arises from them, cannot be

doubted by any one. The benevolent, pious, and conscientious person must therefore, when duly known, and rightly understood, obtain all the honour which men good or bad can bestow; and, as the honour from the first is alone valuable, so he may expect to receive it early, as an immediate reward and support to his present virtues, and an incitement to a daily improvement in them.

Thirdly, For the same reason that we desire honour, esteem, and approbation, from men, and particularly from the wise and good; we must desire them from superior good beings, and, above all, from God, the highest and best. Or, if we do not desire this, it must arise from such an inattention to the most real and important of all relations, as cannot consist with true happiness. Now a regard to benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, is, by the confession of all, the sole foundation for obtaining this greatest of honours, the approbation of God. We cannot indeed enjoy this in perfection, whilst separated from the invisible world by this fleshly tabernacle; but the testimony of a good conscience gives us some foretaste and anticipation of it. How vain and insipid, in respect of this *eternal weight of glory*, are all the encomiums, which all mankind could bestow!

#### P R O P. LXIV.

*To deduce practical Observations on the Nature of Humility, and the Methods of attaining it.*

HERE we may observe,

First, That humility cannot require any man to think worse of himself than according to truth and impartiality: this would be to set the virtues at variance with each other, and to found one of the  
most

most excellent of them, humility, in the base vice of falsehood.

Secondly, True humility consists therefore in having right and just notions of our own accomplishments and defects, of our own virtues and vices. For we ought not to descend lower than this by the foregoing paragraph; and to ascend higher, would evidently be pride, as well as falsehood.

Thirdly, It follows, notwithstanding this definition of humility, and even from it, that humble men, especially in the beginning of a religious course, ought to be much occupied in considering and impressing upon themselves their own misery, imperfection, and sinfulness, excluding as much as possible, all thoughts, and trains of thought, of a contrary nature; also in attending to the perfections of others, and rejecting the consideration of their imperfections. For, since all thoughts which please are apt to recur frequently, and their contraries to be kept out of sight, from the very frame of the mind, as appears from *Prop. 22, Cor. 3.* and other places of the first part of this work, it cannot but be, that all men in their natural state, must be proud; they must, by dwelling upon their own perfections, and the imperfections of others, magnify these; by keeping out of view the contraries, diminish them, *i. e.* they must form too high opinions of themselves, and too low ones of others, which is pride: and they cannot arrive at just and true opinions of themselves and others, which is humility, but by reversing the former steps, and impressing upon themselves, their own imperfection and vileness, and the perfections of others, by express acts of volition.

Fourthly, A truly humble man will avoid comparing himself with others; and when such comparisons do arise in the mind, or are forced upon it, he will not think himself better than others. I do not mean, that those who are eminent for knowledge or virtue, should



should not see and own their superiority, in these respects, over persons evidently ignorant and illiterate, or avowedly vicious. This cannot be avoided; but then this superiority does not minister any food to pride, and a vain complacency in a man's own excellencies. Nor do I mean, that good men may not both humbly hope, that they themselves are within the terms of salvation; and also fear, that the bulk of mankind are not; the first being a support to their infant virtue, and a comfort allowed by God in their passage through this wilderness; the last a great security against infection from a wicked world. I only affirm, that every person, who is duly aware of his own ignorance, as to the secret causes of merit and demerit in himself and others, will first find himself incapable of judging between individuals; and then, if he has duly studied his own imperfections, according to the last paragraph, he will not be apt to presume in his own favour.

Fifthly, It is an inseparable property of humility, not to seek the applauses of the world; but to acquiesce in the respect paid by it, however disproportionate this may be to the merit of the action under consideration. For the contrary behaviour must produce endless inquietude, resentment, envy, and self-conceit.

Sixthly, It is, in like manner, inseparable from true humility, to take shame to ourselves where we have deserved it, to acquiesce under it where we think we have not, and always to suspect our own judgment in the last case. There is no way so short and efficacious as this to mortify that pride, and overweening opinion of ourselves, which is the result of our frame in this degenerate state. Nay, we ought even to rejoice when we are meanly esteemed, and despised, as having then an opportunity offered of imitating him who was *meek and lowly in heart*, and of *finding rest to our souls* thereby.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, It may conduce to eradicate that tendency which every man has to think himself a nonpareil, in some respect or other, to consider natural productions, flowers, fruits, gems, &c. It would be very absurd to affirm of one of these, that it was a nonpareil of its kind, because it is endued with great beauty and lustre; much less therefore ought we to fancy this of that degree of beauty, parts, virtue, which happens to be our lot, and which is certainly magnified beyond the truth in our own eyes, from the interest which we have in ourselves.

Eighthly, There is scarce a more effectual method of curbing ostentation and self-conceit, than frequently to impose upon one's self a voluntary silence, and not to attempt to speak, unless where a plain reason requires it. Voluntary silence is, in respect of ostentation and self-conceit, what fasting is, in respect of luxury and self-indulgence. All persons, who speak much, and with pleasure, intend to engage the attention, and gain the applause, of the audience; and have an high opinion of their own talents. And if this daily, I may say hourly, source and effect of vain-glory was cut off, we might with much greater facility get the victory over the rest. When a person has, by this means, reduced himself to a proper indifference to the opinions of the world, he may by degrees abate of the rigour of his silence, and speak naturally and easily, as occasion offers, without any explicit motive; just as when fasting, and other severities, have brought our appetites within due bounds, we may be directed by them in the choice and quantity of common wholesome foods.

Ninthly, The doctrine of philosophical free-will is the cause and support of much pride and self-conceit; and this so much the more, as it is a doctrine not only allowed, but even insisted upon and required, and made essential to the distinction between virtue  
and

and vice. Hence men are commanded, as it were, to set a value upon their own actions, by esteeming them their own in the highest sense of the words, and taking the merit of them to themselves. For philosophical free-will supposes, that God has given to each man a sphere of action, in which he does not interpose; but leaves man to act entirely from himself, independently of his Creator; and as, upon this foundation, the assertors of philosophical free-will ascribe all the demerit of actions to men, so they are obliged to allow men to take the merit of good actions to themselves, *i. e.* to be proud and self-conceited. This is the plain consequence of the doctrine of philosophical free-will. How far this objection against it over-balances the objections brought against the opposite doctrine of mechanism, I do not here consider. But it was necessary, in treating of the methods of attaining true humility, to shew in what relation the doctrine of free-will stood to this subject.

But we are not to suppose, that every man, who maintains philosophical free-will, does also claim the merit of his good actions to himself. The scriptures are so full and explicit in ascribing all that is good to God, and the heart of a good man concurs so readily with them, that he will rather expose himself to any perplexity of understanding, than to the charge of so great an impiety. Hence it is, that we see, in the writings of many good men, philosophical free-will asserted, on one hand; and merit disclaimed, on the other; in both cases, with a view to avoid consequences apparently impious; though it be impossible to reconcile these doctrines to each other. However, this subjection of the understanding to the moral principle is a noble instance of humility, and rectitude of heart.

As the assertors of philosophical free-will are not necessarily proud, so the assertors of the doctrine of mechanism

mechanism are much less necessarily humble. For, however they may, in theory, ascribe all to God; yet the associations of life beget the idea and opinion of *self* again and again, refer actions to this self, and connect a variety of applauses and complacencies with these actions. Nay, men may be proud of those actions, which they directly and explicitly ascribe to God, *i. e.* proud, that they are instruments in the hand of God for the performing such actions. Thus the pharisee, in our Saviour's parable, though he thanked God, that he was no extortioner, &c. yet boasted of this, and made it a foundation for despising the publican. However, the frequent recollection, that all our actions proceed from God; that we have nothing which we did not receive from him; that there can be no reason in ourselves, why he should select one, rather than another, for an instrument of his glory in this world, &c. and the application of these important truths to the various real circumstances of our lives; must greatly accelerate our progress to humility and self-annihilation. And, when men are far advanced in this state, they may enjoy quiet and comfort, notwithstanding their past sins and frailties; for they approach to the paradisiacal state, in which our first parents, though naked, were not ashamed. But the greatest caution is requisite here, lest by a fresh disobedience we come to know evil as well as good again, and, by desiring to be gods, to be independent, make the return of shame, punishment, and mystical death, necessary for our readmission to the tree of life.

Tenthly, It will greatly recommend humility to us, to consider how much misery a disposition to glory in our superiority over others may hereafter occasion. Let it be observed therefore, that every finite perfection, how great soever, is at an infinitely greater distance from the infinite perfection of God, than from nothing; so that every finite being may have,  
and



and probably has, infinitely more superiors than inferiors. But the same disposition, which makes him glory over his inferiors, must make him envy his superiors: he will therefore have, from this his disposition, infinitely more cause to grieve, than to rejoice. And it appears, from this way of considering things, that nothing could enable us to bear the lustre of the invisible world, were it opened to our view, but humility, self-annihilation, and the love of God, and of his creatures, in and through him.

Eleventhly, If we may be allowed to suppose all God's creatures ultimately and indefinitely happy, according to the third supposition made above for explaining the infinite goodness of God, this would unite the profoundest humility with the highest gratification of our desires after honour. For this makes all God's creatures equal in the eye of their Creator; and therefore, as it obliges us to call the vilest worm our sister, so it transfers upon us the glory of the brightest archangel; we are all equally made *to inherit all things*, are all equally *heirs of God, and coheirs with Christ*.

S E C T. V.

OF THE REGARD DUE TO THE PLEASURES  
AND PAINS OF SELF-INTEREST IN FORM-  
ING THE RULE OF LIFE.

P R O P. LXV.

*The Pleasures of Self-interest ought not to be made a  
primary Pursuit.*

SELF-INTEREST is of three kinds, as has been already explained, viz.

First, Gross self-interest, or the pursuit of the means for obtaining the pleasures of sensation, imagination, and ambition.

Secondly, Refined self-interest, or the pursuit of the means for obtaining the pleasures of sympathy, theopathy, and the moral sense.

Thirdly, Rational self-interest, or the pursuit of such things, as are believed to be the means for obtaining our greatest possible happiness, at the same time that we are ignorant, or do not consider, from what particular species of pleasure this our greatest possible happiness will arise.

Now it is my design, under this proposition, to shew, that none of these three kinds of self-interest ought to be cherished and indulged as the law of our natures, and the end of life; and that even rational self-interest is allowable, only when it tends to restrain other pursuits, that are more erroneous, and destructive of our true happiness.

I begin with the arguments against gross self-interest.

First,

First, then, We ought not to pursue the means for obtaining the pleasures of sensation, imagination, and ambition, primarily, because these pleasures themselves ought not to be made primary pursuits, as has been shewn in the three last sections. The means borrow all their lustre from the ends by association; and, if the original lustre of the ends be not sufficient to justify our making them a primary pursuit, the borrowed one of the means cannot. In like manner, if the original lustre be a false light, an *ignis fatuus*, that misleads and seduces us, the borrowed one must mislead and seduce also. And indeed, though we sometimes rest in the means for obtaining the pleasures of sensation, imagination, and ambition, and desire riches, possessions of other kinds, power, privileges, accomplishments, bodily and mental, for their own sakes, as it were; yet, for the most part, they introduce an explicit regard to these exploded pleasures, and consequently must increase the corruption and false cravings, of our minds; and, if they did not, their borrowed lustre would gradually languish, and die away, so that they would cease to excite desire. It is to be added, that, if they be considered and pursued as means, they will be used as such, *i. e.* will actually involve us in the enjoyment of unlawful pleasures.

Secondly, The treasuring up the means of happiness bears a very near relation to ambition. Those who desire great degrees of riches, power, learning, &c. desire also that their acquisitions should be known to the world. Men have a great ambition to be thought happy, and to have it in their power to gratify themselves at pleasure; and this ostentatious design is one principal motive for acquiring all the supposed means of happiness. The reasons therefore, which exclude ambition, must contribute to exclude self-interest also.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Gross self-interest has a manifest tendency to deprive us of the pleasures of sympathy, and to expose us to its pains. Rapaciousness extinguishes all sparks of good-will and generosity, and begets endless resentments, jealousies, and envies. And indeed a great part of the contentions, and mutual injuries, which we see in the world, arise, because either one or both of the contending parties desire more than an equitable share of the means of happiness. It is to be added, that gross self-interest has a peculiar tendency to increase itself from the constant recurrency, and consequent augmentation, of the ideas and desires that relate to *self*, and the exclusion of those that relate to others.

Now this inconsistency of gross self-interest with sympathy would be some argument against it, barely upon supposition, that sympathy was one necessary part of our natures, and which ought to have an equal share with sensation, imagination, and ambition; but as it now begins to appear from the exclusion of these, and other arguments, that more than an equal share is due to sympathy, the opposition between them becomes a still stronger argument against self-interest.

Fourthly, There is, in like manner, an evident opposition between gross self-interest, and the pleasures of theopathy, and of the moral sense, and, by consequence, an insuperable objection to its being made our primary pursuit, deducible from these essential parts of our nature.

Fifthly, Gross self-interest, when indulged, devours many of the pleasures of sensation, and most of those of imagination and ambition, *i. e.* many of the pleasures from which it takes its rise. This is peculiarly true and evident in the love of money; but it holds also, in a certain degree, with respect to the other selfish pursuits. It must therefore destroy itself in part, as well as the pleasures of sympathy,



theopathy, and the moral sense, with the refined self-interest grounded thereon. And thus it happens, that in very avaricious persons nothing remains but sensuality, sensual selfishness, and an uneasy hankering after money, which is a more imperfect state, than that in which they were at their first setting off in infancy. Some of the stronger and more ordinary sensible pleasures and pains, with the desires after them, must remain in the most sordid, as long as they carry their bodies about with them, and are subjected to the cravings of the natural appetites, and to the impressions of external objects. But a violent passion for money gets the better of all relish for the elegancies and amusements of life, of the desire of honour, love, and esteem, and even of many of the sensual gratifications. Now it cannot be, that a pursuit which is so opposite to all the parts of our nature, should be intended by the author of it for our primary one.

Sixthly, Men, in treasuring up the means of happiness without limits, seem to go upon the supposition, that their capacity of enjoying happiness is infinite; and consequently that the stock of happiness, laid up for them to enjoy hereafter, is proportional to the stock of means, which they have amassed together. But our capacity for enjoying happiness is narrow and fluctuating; and there are many periods, during which no objects, however grateful to others, can afford us pleasure, on account of the disorder of our bodies or minds. If the theory of these papers be admitted, it furnishes us with an easy explanation of this matter, by shewing that our capacity for receiving pleasure depends upon our associations, and upon the state of the medullary substance of the brain; and consequently that it must fail often, and correspond very imperfectly to the objects, which are usually called pleasurable ones.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, It is very evident in fact, that self-interested men are not more happy than their neighbours, whatever means of happiness they may possess. I presume indeed, that experience supports the reasoning already alleged; but, however that be, it certainly supports the conclusion. Nay, one ought to say, that covetous men are, in general, remarkably miserable. The hardships, cares, fears, ridicule and contempt, to which they subject themselves, appear to be greater evils, than what fall to the share of mankind at an average.

Eighthly, One may put this whole matter in a short and obvious light, thus: the pursuit of the means of happiness cannot be the primary one, because, if all be means, what becomes of the end? Means, as means, can only be pleasant in a derivative way from the end. If the end be seldom or never obtained, the pleasure of the means must languish. The intellectual pleasures, that are become ends by the entire coalescence of the associated particulars, fade from being diluted with the mixture of neutral circumstances, unless they be perpetually recruited. A selfish expectation therefore, which is never gratified, must gradually languish.

I come now, in the second place, to shew that refined self-interest, or the pursuit of the means for obtaining the pleasures of sympathy, theopathy, and the moral sense, ought not to be made a primary pursuit.

A person who is arrived at this refined self-interest, must indeed be advanced some steps higher in the scale of perfection, than those who are immersed in gross self-interest; inasmuch as this person must have overcome, in some measure, the gross pleasures of sensation, imagination, and ambition, with the gross self-interest thereon depending, and have made some considerable progress in sympathy, theopathy, and the moral sense, before he can make it a question whether the pursuit of refined self-interest ought  
T 2  
to

to be his primary pursuit or no. However, that it ought not, that this would detain him, and even bring him lower in the scale of perfection, will appear from the following reasons.

First, Many of the objections which have been brought against gross self-interest, retain their force against the refined, though in a less degree. Thus refined self-interest puts us upon treasuring up the same means as the gross; for the persons, who are influenced by it, consider riches, power, learning, &c. as means of doing good to men, bringing glory to God, and enjoying comfortable reflections in their own minds in consequence thereof. But the desire of riches, power, learning, must introduce ambition, and other defilements, from the many corrupt associations that adhere to them. In like manner, refined self-interest has, like the gross, a tendency to destroy the very pleasures from which it took its rise, *i. e.* the pleasures of sympathy, theopathy, and the moral sense; it cannot afford happiness, unless the mind and body be properly disposed; it does not, in fact, make men happy; but is the parent of dissatisfaction, murmurings, and aridity; and, being professedly the pursuit of a bare means, involves the absurdity of having no real end in view. It may not be improper here for the reader just to review the objections made above to gross self-interest.

Secondly, Refined self-interest, when indulged, is a much deeper and more dangerous error than the gross, because it shelters itself under sympathy, theopathy, and the moral sense, so as to grow through their protection; whereas the gross self-interest, being avowedly contrary to them, is often stifled by the increase of benevolence and compassion, of the love and fear of God, and of the sense of duty to him.

Thirdly, It is allied to, and, as it were, part of the foregoing objection, which yet deserves a particular

cular consideration, that the pride attending on refined self-interest, when carried to a certain height, is of an incorrigible, and, as it were, diabolical nature. And, upon the whole, we may observe, that as gross self-interest, when it gets possession of a man, puts him into a lower condition than the mere sensual brutal one, in which he was born; so refined self-interest, when that gets possession, depresses him still farther, even to the very confines of hell. However, it is still to be remembered, that some degree must arise in the beginning of a religious course; and that this, if it be watched and resisted, is an argument of our advancement in piety and virtue. But the best things, when corrupted, often become the worst.

I come now, in the last place, to consider what objections lie against rational self-interest, as our primary pursuit.

Now here it may be alleged, First, That as we cannot but desire any particular pleasure proposed to us, as long as the associations, which formed it, subsist in due strength; so, when any thing is believed to be the means of attaining our greatest possible happiness, the whole frame of our acquired nature puts us upon pursuing it. Rational self-interest must therefore always have a necessary influence over us.

Secondly, It may be alleged, that I have myself made rational self-interest the basis of the present inquiry after the rule of life, having supposed all along, that our greatest possible happiness is the object of this rule.

And it certainly follows hence, that rational self-interest is to be put upon a very different footing from that of the gross and refined; agreeably to which the scriptures propose general and indefinite hopes and fears, and especially those of a future state, and inculcate them as good and proper motives of action. But then, on the other hand, the



scriptures inculcate many other motives, distinct from hope and fear; such as the love of God and our neighbour, the law of our minds, &c. *i. e.* the motives of sympathy, theopathy, and the moral sense, as explained in this work. And we may see from the reasoning used in respect of gross and refined self-interest, that a constant attention to that which is the most pure and rational, to the most general hopes and fears, would extinguish our love of God and our neighbour, as well as the other particular desires, and augment the ideas and desires, which centre immediately and directly in *self*, to a monstrous height. Rational self-interest may therefore be said to lie between the impure motives of sensation, imagination, ambition, gross self-interest, and refined self-interest, on the one hand, and the pure ones of sympathy, theopathy, and the moral sense, on the other; so that when it restrains the impure ones, or cherishes the pure, it may be reckoned a virtue; when it cherishes the impure, or damps the pure, a vice. Now there are instances of both kinds, of the first in grossly vicious persons, of the last in those that have made considerable advancement in piety and virtue. In like manner the impure motives of sensation, imagination, &c. differ in degree of impurity from each other; and therefore may be either virtues or vices, in a relative way of speaking. It seems, however, most convenient, upon the whole, to make rational self-interest the middle point; and this, with all the other reasoning of this paragraph, may serve to shew, that it ought not to be cultivated primarily. But I shall have occasion to consider this matter farther under the next proposition but one, when I come to deduce practical observations on self-interest and self-annihilation.

It may be reckoned a part of the gross and refined self-interests, to secure ourselves against the hazards  
of

of falling into the pains of the other six classes, and a part of rational self-interest, to provide against our greatest danger; and it might be shewn in like manner, that neither ought these to be primary pursuits.

## P R O P. LXVI.

*A strict Regard to the Precepts of Benevolence, Piety; and the moral Sense, favours even gross Self-interest; and is the only Method, by which the refined and rational can be secured.*

HERE we may observe,

First, That since the regard to benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, procures the pleasures of sensation, imagination, and ambition, in their greatest perfection for the most part; it must favour gross self-interest, or the pursuit of the means of these.

Secondly, This regard has, in many cases, an immediate tendency to procure these means, *i. e.* to procure riches, power, learning, &c. And though it happens sometimes, that a man must forego both the means for obtaining pleasure, and pleasure itself, from a regard to duty; and happens often, that the best men have not the greatest share of the means; yet it seems that the best men have, in general, the fairest prospect for that competency, which is most suitable to real enjoyment. Thus, in trades and professions, though it seldom is observed, that men eminent for piety and charity amass great wealth (which indeed could not well consist with these virtues); yet they are generally in affluent or easy circumstances, from the faithful discharge of duty, their prudence, moderation in expences, &c. and scarce ever in indigent ones. A sense of duty begets a desire to discharge it; this recommends to the world, to the bad as well as to the good; and, where there

are instances apparently to the contrary, farther information will, for the most part, discover some secret pride, negligence, or imprudence, *i. e.* something contrary to duty, to which the person's ill success in respect of this world may be ascribed.

Thirdly, A regard to duty plainly gives the greatest capacity for enjoyment; as it secures us against those disorders of body and mind, which render the natural objects of pleasure insipid or ungrateful.

Fourthly, As to refined self-interest, or the pursuit of the means for obtaining the pleasures of sympathy, theopathy, and the moral sense, it appears at first sight, that a due regard to these must procure for us both the end, and the means.

Fifthly, However the gross or refined self-interest may, upon certain occasions, be disappointed, the rational one never can, whilst we act upon a principle of duty. Our future happiness must be secured thereby. This the profane and profligate, as far as they have any belief of God, providence, or a future state (and I presume, that no one could ever arrive at more than scepticism and uncertainty in these things), allow, as well as the devout and pious christian. And, when the rational self-interest is thus secured, the disappointments of the other two become far less grievous, make far less impression upon the mind. He that has a certain reversion of an infinite and eternal inheritance, may be very indifferent about present possessions.

#### P R O P. LXVII.

*To deduce practical Observations on Self-interest and Self-annihilation.*

SELF-INTEREST being reckoned by some writers the only stable point upon which a system of morality can be erected, and self-annihilation by others  
the

the only one in which man can rest, I will here endeavour to reconcile these two opinions, giving at the same time both a general description of what passes in our progress from self-interest to self-annihilation, and some short hints of what is to be approved or condemned in this practice.

First, then, The vicious pleasures of sensation, imagination, and ambition, being often very expensive, are checked by the grossest of all the self-interests, the mere love of money; and the principle upon which men act in this case is esteemed one species of prudence. This may be tolerated in others, where it is not in our power to infuse a better motive; but, in a man's self, it is very absurd to have recourse to one, which must leave so great a defilement, when others that are purer and stronger, rational self-interest particularly, are at hand.

Secondly, The desire of bodily and mental accomplishments, learning particularly, considered as means of happiness, often checks both the forementioned vicious pleasures, and the love of money. Now this kind of self-interest is preferable to the last indeed; but it cannot be approved by any that are truly solicitous about their own reformation and purification.

Thirdly, Gross self-interest sometimes excites persons to external acts of benevolence, and even of piety; and though there is much hypocrisy always in these cases, yet an imperfect benevolence or piety is sometimes generated in this way. However, one cannot but condemn this procedure in the highest degree.

Fourthly, As refined self-interest arises from benevolence, piety, and the moral sense; so, conversely, it promotes them in various ways. But, then, as it likewise checks their growth in various other ways, it cannot be allowed in many cases, and is, upon the whole, rather to be condemned than approved. More favour may be shewn to it, where it restrains  
the



the vicious pleasures of sensation, imagination, and ambition.

Fifthly, Rational self-interest puts us upon all the proper methods of checking the last-named vicious pleasures with gross and refined self-interest, and begetting in ourselves the virtuous dispositions of benevolence, piety, and the moral sense. This part of our progress is extremely to be approved, and especially the last branch of it.

Sixthly, The virtuous dispositions of benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, and particularly that of the love of God, check all the foregoing ones, and seem sufficient utterly to extinguish them at last. This would be perfect self-annihilation, and resting in God as our centre. And, upon the whole, we may conclude, that though it be impossible to begin without sensuality, and sensual selfishness, or to proceed without the other intermediate principles, and particularly that of rational self-interest; yet we ought never to be satisfied with ourselves, till we arrive at perfect self-annihilation, and the pure love of God.

We may observe also, that the method of destroying *self*, by perpetually substituting a less and purer self-interest for a larger and grosser, corresponds to some mathematical methods of obtaining quantities to any required degree of exactness, by leaving a less and less error *sine limite*. And though absolute exactitude may not be possible in the first case, any more than in the last; yet a degree sufficient for future happiness is certainly attainable by a proper use of the events of this life.

S E C T. VI.

OF THE REGARD DUE TO THE PLEASURES  
AND PAINS OF SYMPATHY IN FORMING  
THE RULE OF LIFE.

P R O P. LXVIII.

*The Pleasures of Sympathy improve those of Sensation, Imagination, Ambition, and Self-interest; and unite with those of Theopathy, and the moral Sense; they are self-consistent, and admit of an unlimited Extent: they may therefore be our primary Pursuit.*

THAT the pleasures of sympathy improve those of sensation, imagination, ambition, and self-interest, by limiting and regulating them, appears from the four last sections.

Their union and entire coincidence with those of theopathy are evident, inasmuch as we are led by the love of good men to that of God, and back again by the love of God to that of all his creatures in and through him; also as it must be the will of an infinitely benevolent being, that we should cultivate universal unlimited benevolence.

In like manner, they may be proved to unite and coincide with the pleasures of the moral sense, both because they are one principal source of the moral sense, and because this, in its turn, approves of and enforces them entirely.

In order to prove their unlimited extent, let us suppose, as we did before of sensation, that a person took all opportunities of gratifying his benevolent desires;

desires; that he made it his study, pleasure, ambition, and constant employment, either to promote happiness, or lessen misery, to go *about doing good*.

First, then, It is very plain, that such a person would have a very large field of employment. The relations of life, conjugal, parental, filial, to friends, strangers, enemies, to superiors, equals, inferiors, and even to brutes, and the necessities of each, are so numerous, that, if we were not greatly wanting in benevolent affections, we should have no want of fit objects for them.

Secondly, As the occasions are sufficient to engage our time, so we may, in general, expect success. Not only the persons themselves, to whom we intend to do service, may be expected to concur, but others also, in general; inasmuch as benevolence gains the love and esteem of the beholders, has a persuasiveness and prevalence over them, and engages them to co-operate towards its success. It is very necessary indeed, that all benevolent persons should guard against the fallies of pride, self-will, and passion, in themselves, *i. e.* take care that their benevolence be pure; also that it be improved by piety, and the moral sense; else it is probable, that they will meet with many disappointments. But this is no argument against the unlimited nature of benevolence: it only tends to exclude the mixture and defilement of ill dispositions; and to shew the necessary connection of the love of their neighbour with that of God, and with the divine signature of conscience, which I all along contend for. When our benevolence is thus pure, and thus directed, it will seldom fail of gaining its purpose. And yet disappointments must sometimes happen to the purest benevolence; else our love of God, and resignation to his will, which is the highest principle of all, could not be brought to perfection. But then this will happen so rarely as to make no alteration in  
our

our reasonings, with respect to the general state of things; which kind of reasoning and certainty is all that we are qualified for in our present condition.

Thirdly, As the benevolent person may expect both sufficient employment and success, in general; so it does not appear from the experience of those who make the trial, that the relish for these pleasures languishes, as in other cases; but, on the contrary, that it gathers strength from gratification. We hear men complaining frequently of the vanity and deceitfulness of the other pleasures after possession and gratification, but never of those of benevolence, when improved by religion, and the moral sense. On the contrary, these pleasures are greater in enjoyment than expectation; and continue to please in reflection, and after enjoyment. And the foregoing history of association may enable us to discover how this comes to pass. Since the pleasures of benevolence are, in general, attended with success, and are consistent with, and productive of, the several inferior pleasures in their due degree, as I have already shewn, and also are farther illuminated by the moral and religious pleasures, it is plain, that they must receive fresh recruits upon every gratification, and therefore increase perpetually, when cultivated as they ought to be.

The self-consistency of benevolence appears from the peculiar harmony, love, esteem, and mutual co-operation, that prevail amongst benevolent persons; also from the tendency that acts of benevolence, proceeding from *A* to *B*, have to excite correspondent ones reciprocally from *B* to *A*, and so on indefinitely. We may observe farther, that, when benevolence is arrived at a due height, all our desires and fears, all our sensibilities for ourselves, are more or less transferred upon others by our love and compassion for them; and, in like manner, that  
when



when our moral sense is sufficiently established and improved, when we become influenced by what is fit and right, our imperfect sensibility for others lessens our exorbitant concern for ourselves by being compared with it, at the same time that compassion takes off our thoughts from ourselves. And thus benevolence to a single person may ultimately become equal to self-interest, by this tendency of self-interest to increase benevolence, and reciprocally of benevolence to lessen self-interest; though self-interest was at first infinitely greater than benevolence, *i. e.* we, who come into the world entirely selfish, earthly, and *children of wrath*, may at last be exalted to *the glorious liberty of the sons of God*, by learning to love our neighbours as ourselves: we may learn to be as much concerned for others as for ourselves, and as little concerned for ourselves, as for others; both which things tend to make benevolence and self-interest equal, however unequal they were at first.

And now a new scene begins to open itself to our view. Let us suppose, that the benevolence of *A* is very imperfect; however, that it considerably exceeds his malevolence; so that he receives pleasure, upon the whole, from the happiness of *B, C, D, &c.* *i. e.* from that of the small circle of those, whom he has already learnt to call his neighbours. Let us suppose also, that *B, C, D, &c.* though affected with a variety of pains, as well as pleasures, are yet happy, upon the whole; and that *A*, though he does not see this balance of happiness clearly, yet has some comfortable general knowledge of it. This then is the happiness of good men in this present imperfect state; and it is evident, that they are great gainers, upon the whole, from their benevolence. At the same time it gives us a faint conception of *A*'s unbounded happiness, on supposition that he considered every man as his friend, his son, his neighbour, his second self, and loved him as himself;  
and

and that his neighbour was exalted to the same unbounded happiness as himself by the same unlimited benevolence. Thus *A, B, C, D, &c.* would all become, as it were, new sets of senses, and perceptive powers, to each other, so as to increase each other's happiness without limits; they would all become *members of the mystical body of Christ*; all have an equal care for each other; all increase in love, and come to their *full stature*, to perfect manhood, *by that which every joint supplieth*: happiness would circulate through this mystical body without end, so as that each particle of it would, in due time, arrive at each individual point, or sentient being, of the great whole, that each would *inherit all things*.

To strengthen our presumptions in favour of benevolence, as the primary pursuit of life, still more; let it be considered, that its pleasures lie open to all kinds and degrees of men, since every man has it in his power to benefit others, however superior or inferior, and since we all stand in need of each other. And the difference which nature has put between us and the brutes, in making us so much more dependent upon, and necessary to, each other from the cradle to the grave, for life, health, convenience, pleasure, education, and intellectual accomplishments, so much less able to subsist singly, or even in small bodies, than the brutes, may be considered as one mark of the superior excellence of the social pleasures to man. All the tendencies of the events of life, ordinary and extraordinary, of the relations of life, of the foregoing pleasures and pains, to connect us to each other, to convert accidental, natural, instituted associations into permanent coalescences (for all this is effected by the power of association so much spoken of in these papers), so that two ill men can scarce become known to each other familiarly, without conceiving some love, tenderness, compassion, complacence for each other, are arguments to the  
same

same purpose. And our love to relations and friends, that have particular failings, teaches us to be more candid towards others, who have the like failings. At the same time it shews the consistency of benevolence with itself, and its tendency to improve itself; that we love, esteem, assist, and encourage the benevolent more than others; so that a benevolent action not only excites the receiver to a grateful return, but also the by-stander to approve and reward; and the benevolent man receives an hundred fold even in this world. But it would be endless to pursue this. Benevolence is indeed the grand design and purport of human life, of the present probationary state; and therefore every circumstance of human life must point to it, directly or indirectly, when duly considered.

COR. I. Since benevolence now appears to be a primary pursuit, it follows, that all the pleasures of malevolence are forbidden, as being so many direct hinderances and bars to our happiness. The pleasures of sensation, imagination, ambition, and self-interest, may all be made consistent with benevolence, when limited by, and made subject to it, at least in this imperfect state; but those of malevolence are quite incompatible with it. As far as malevolence is allowed, benevolence must be destroyed; they are heat and cold, light and darkness, to each other. There is, however, this exception; that where wishing evil to some, disposes us to be more benevolent upon the whole, as in the case of what is called a just indignation against vice, it may perhaps be tolerable in the more imperfect kinds of men, who have need of this direction and incitement to keep them from wandering out of the proper road, and to help them forward in it. But it is extremely dangerous to encourage such a disposition of mind by satire, invective, dispute, however unworthy the opponent may be, as these practices generally end in rank malevolence

malevolence at last. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*

COR. 2. As we must forego the pleasures of malevolence, so we must patiently and resolutely endure the pains of benevolence, particularly those of compassion. But we shall not be losers upon either of these accounts. The pleasures of the moral sense, which result from these virtues, will in the first case compensate for what we forego, and in the last overbalance what we endure. Besides which, mercy and forgiveness are themselves pleasures, and productive of many others in the event; and compassion generally puts us upon such methods, as both make the afflicted to rejoice, and beget in ourselves a stronger disposition to rejoice with them. However, we may learn from these two corollaries, that as our passage through the four inferior, and, as it were forbidden, classes of pleasure and pain, is not entire self-denial and sufferance, so some degrees of these are necessary in respect of the three superior classes. We must *weep with those that weep*, as well as *rejoice with those that rejoice*. In like manner, theopathy, and the moral sense, are the occasions of some pain, as well as of great and lasting pleasure; as will appear hereafter. Now all this mixture of pain with pleasure in each class, as also the difficulty which we find in bringing the inferior classes into a due subordination to the superior, are consequences and marks of our fallen and degenerate state.

COR. 3. As benevolence is thus supported by many direct arguments, so there are similar and opposite arguments, which shew that malevolence is the bane of human happiness; that it occasions misery to the doer, as well as to the sufferer; that it is infinitely inconsistent with itself, and with the course of nature; and that it is impossible, that it should subsist for ever. Now these become so many indirect ones for benevolence, and for our making it the



supreme pleasure and end of our lives. In order to make this appear more fully, let us take a survey of human life on the reverse side to that which we have before considered. We shall there see, that injuries are increased in various ways by reciprocation, till at last mutual sufferings oblige both parties to desist; that the course and constitution of nature give us numberless admonitions to forbear; and that the hand of every man, and the power of every thing, are against the malevolent: so that, if we should suppose the beings *A, B, C, D, &c.* to be purely malevolent, to have each of them an indefinite number of enemies, they would first cease from their enmity on account of their mutual sufferings, and become purely selfish, each being his own sole friend and protector; and afterwards, by mutual good offices, endear themselves to each other; so that at last each would have an indefinite number of friends, *i. e.* be indefinitely happy. This is indeed a kind of supposition; but its obvious correspondence with what we see and feel in real life, is a strong argument both of the infinite goodness of God, and of the consequent doctrine of the tendency of all beings to unlimited happiness through benevolence. For the beings *A, B, C, D, &c.* could no more stop at pure selfishness, or any other intermediate point, than they could rest in pure malevolence. And thus the arguments, which exclude pure malevolence, necessarily infer pure unlimited benevolence.

## P R O P. LXIX.

*To deduce practical Rules for augmenting the benevolent Affections, and suppressing the malevolent ones.*

For this purpose we ought, First, Diligently to practise all such acts of friendship, generosity, and compassion, as our abilities of any kind extend to; and rigorously to refrain from all sallies of anger, resentment, envy, jealousy, &c. For though our affections are not directly and immediately subject to the voluntary power, yet our actions are; and consequently our affections also mediately. He that at first practises acts of benevolence by constraint, and continues to practise them, will at last have associated such a variety of pleasures with them, as to transfer a great instantaneous pleasure upon them, and beget in himself the affections from which they naturally flow. In like manner, if we abstain from malevolent actions, we shall dry up the ill passions, which are their sources.

Secondly, It will be of great use frequently to reflect upon the great pleasures and rewards attending on benevolence, also upon the many evils present and future, to which the contrary temper exposes us. For thus we shall likewise transfer pleasure and pain by association upon these tempers respectively; and rational self-interest will be made to beget pure benevolence, and to extinguish all kinds and degrees of malevolence.

Thirdly, It is necessary to pray frequently and fervently (*i. e.* as far as we can excite fervour by our voluntary powers) for others, friends, benefactors, strangers, enemies. All exertions of our affections cherish them; and those made under the more immediate sense of the divine attributes have an extraor-

dinary efficacy this way, by mixing the love, awe, and other exalted emotions of mind attending our addresses to God, with our affections towards men, so as to improve and purify them thereby. Petitions for the increase of our benevolence, and suppression of our malevolence, have the same tendency.

Fourthly, All meditations upon the attributes of God, and particularly upon his infinite benevolence to all his creatures, have a strong tendency to refine and augment our benevolent affections.

Fifthly, The frequent consideration of our own misery, helplessness, sinfulness, entire dependence upon God, &c. raises in us compassion for others, as well as concern, and earnest desires and prayers, for ourselves. And compassion is, in this imperfect probationary state, a most principal part of our benevolent affections.

#### P R O P. LXX.

*To deduce practical Rules for the Conduct of Men towards each other in Society.*

SINCE benevolence is now proved to be a primary pursuit, it follows, that we are to direct every action so as to produce the greatest happiness, and the least misery, in our power. This is that rule of social behaviour, which universal unlimited benevolence inculcates.

But the application of this rule in real life is attended with considerable difficulties and perplexities. It is impossible for the most sagacious and experienced persons to make any accurate estimate of the future consequences of particular actions, so as, in all the variety of circumstances which occur, to determine justly, which action would contribute most to augment happiness and lessen misery. We must therefore, instead of this most general rule, substitute others less general, and subordinate to it, and which admit

admit of a more commodious practical application. Of this kind are the ten rules that follow. Where they coincide, we may suppose them to add strength to each other; where they are opposite, or seemingly so, to moderate and restrain one another; so as that the sum total shall always be the best direction in our power for promoting the happiness, and lessening the misery, of others.

The first rule is obedience to the scripture precepts in the natural, obvious, and popular meaning of them. That this must, in general, contribute to public good, needs no proof: piety and benevolence evidently coincide here, as in other cases. The scripture precepts are indeed themselves, *the rule of life*. But then there is the same sort of difficulty in applying them accurately to particular cases, as in applying the above-mentioned most general rule, by means of an estimate of the consequences of actions. It is impossible, in many particular cases, from the nature of language, to determine whether the action under consideration come precisely under this or that scripture precept, interpreted literally, as may appear from the endless subtleties and intricacies of casuistical divinity. However, it cannot but be that the common and popular application must, for the most part, direct us to their true intention and meaning. Let every man therefore, in the particular circumstances of real life, recollect the scripture precepts, and follow them in their first and most obvious sense, unless where this is strongly opposite to some of the following rules; which yet will seldom happen.

Secondly, Great regard must be had both to our own moral sense, and to that of others. This rule coincides remarkably with the foregoing. They are together the chief supports of all that is good, even in the most refined and philosophical, as well as in the vulgar; and therefore must not be weakened, or explained away.



Thirdly, It is very proper in all deliberate actions to weigh, as well as we can, the probable consequences on each side, and to suffer the balance to have some influence in all cases, and the chief where the other rules do not interfere much, or explicitly. But to be determined by our own judgments as to consequences, in opposition to the two foregoing rules, or to those that follow, favours much of pride, and is often only a cloak for self-interest and maliciousness.

Fourthly, The natural motions of good-will, compassion, &c. must have great regard paid to them, lest we contract a philosophical hardness of heart, by endeavouring or pretending to act upon higher and more extensively beneficial views, than vulgar minds, the softer sex, &c. Some persons carry this much too far on the other side, and encourage many public mischiefs, through a false misguided tenderness to criminals, persons in distress through present gross vices, &c. For the mere instantaneous motions of good-will and compassion, which are generated in so many different ways in different persons, cannot be in all more than a good general direction for promoting the greatest good.

Fifthly, The rule of placing ourselves in the several situations of all the persons concerned, and inquiring what we should then expect, is of excellent use for directing, enforcing, and restraining our actions, and for begetting in us a ready, constant sense of what is fit and equitable.

Sixthly, Persons in the near relations of life, benefactors, dependents, and enemies, seem to have, in most cases, a prior claim to strangers. For the general benevolence arises from our cultivation of these particular sources of it. The root must therefore be cherished, that the branches may flourish, and the fruit arrive to its perfection.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, Benevolent and religious persons have, all other circumstances being equal, a prior claim to the rest of mankind. Natural benevolence itself teaches this, as well as the moral sense. But it is likewise of great importance to the public, thus to encourage virtue. Not to mention, that all opportunities and powers become more extensively beneficial, by being entrusted with deserving persons.

Eighthly, Since the concerns of religion, and a future state, are of infinitely more importance than those which relate to this world, we ought to be principally solicitous about the establishment and promotion of true and pure religion, and to make all our endeavours concerning temporal things subservient to the precepts for teaching all nations, and for carrying the everlasting gospel to the ends of the earth.

Ninthly, We ought to pay the strictest regard to truth, both with respect to affirmations and promises. There are very few instances, where veracity of both kinds is not evidently conducive to public good, and falsehood in every degree pernicious. It follows therefore, that, in cases where appearances are otherwise, the general regard to truth, which is of so much consequence to the world, ought to make us adhere inviolably to it; and that it is a most dangerous practice to falsify, as is often done, from false delicacy, pretended or even real officiousness, false shame, and other such dissingenuous motives, or even from those that border upon virtue. The harm which these things do, by creating a mutual diffidence, and disposition to deceive, in mankind, is exceedingly great; and cannot be counterbalanced by the present good effects, assigned as the reasons for this practice. Yet still the degrees are here, as in other cases, so insensible, and the boundaries so nice, that it is difficult, or even impossible, to give any exact rule. A direct falsehood seems scarce to

admit a toleration, whatever be thrown into the opposite scale; unless in cases of madness, murder to be prevented, &c. Equivocations, concealments, pretences, are in general unjustifiable; but may perhaps be sometimes allowed. The wisdom of the serpent joined to the innocence of the dove, or christian prudence to christian simplicity and charity, will generally enable men to avoid all difficulties. There is scarce any thing which does greater violence to the moral sense in well educated persons, than dissingenuousness of any kind, which is a strong argument against it. Lies and liars are particularly noted in the prophetic writings, and the great sin of idolatry is represented under this image. As to false oaths, affirmative or promissory, there seems to be no possible reason sufficient to justify the violation of them. The third commandment, and the reverence due to the divine majesty, lay an absolute restraint here.

Tenthly, Obedience to the civil magistrate is a subordinate general rule of the utmost importance. It is evidently for the public good, that every member of a state should submit to the governing power, whatever that be. Peace, order, and harmony, result from this in the general; confusion and mischief of all kinds from the contrary. So that though it may and must be supposed, that disobedience, in certain particular cases, will, as far as the single act, and its immediate consequences, are considered, contribute more to public good, than obedience; yet, as it is a dangerous example to others, and will probably lead the person himself into other instances of disobedience afterwards, &c. disobedience in every case becomes destructive of public happiness upon the whole. To this we may add, that as part of our notions of, and regards to, the Deity, are taken from the civil magistrate; so, conversely, the magistrate is to be considered as God's vicegerent  
on

on earth; and all opposition to him weakens the force of religious obligations, as well as of civil ones; and if there be an oath of fidelity and submission, or even a bare promise, this will give a farther sanction. Lastly, the precepts of the New Testament given under very wicked governors, and the whole tenor of it, which supposes christians to have higher views, and not to intermeddle with the kingdoms of this world, enjoin an implicit submission.

We ought therefore, in consequence of this tenth rule, to reverence all persons in authority; not to pass hasty censures upon their actions; to make candid allowances on account of the difficulties of government, the bad education of princes, and persons of high birth, and the flatteries, and extraordinary temptations, with which they are surrounded; to observe the laws ourselves and promote the observance of them, where the penalties may be evaded, or are found insufficient; to look upon property as a thing absolutely determined by the laws; so that though a man may and ought to recede from what the law would give him, out of compassion, generosity, love of peace, view of the greater good to the whole, &c. yet he must never evade, strain, or in any way do violence to the laws, in order to obtain what he may think his own according to equity; and wherever he has offended, or is judged by lawful authority to have offended, he must submit to the punishment, whatever it be.

Here two things may be objected in respect of this tenth rule: First, That the duty to magistrates ought to be deduced from the origin of civil government. Secondly, That it is lawful to resist the supreme magistrate openly, in those cases, where the good consequences of open resistance appear in the ultimate result to overbalance the ill consequences.

To



To the first I answer, that we here suppose benevolence to be the rule of duty, public good the end of benevolence, and submission to magistrates the means of promoting the public good. Unless therefore something can be objected to one of these three positions, the conclusion, that submission to magistrates is a duty, must stand. It appears to me also, that this method of deducing obedience to magistrates is much more simple and direct, than that from the origin of civil government. For the real origin of civil government having been either the gradual transition and degeneration of parental patriarchal authority (which being originally directed by pure love, and supported by absolute authority, can never be paralleled now) into small monarchies in the ancient world, of which we know nothing accurately; or the usurped power of conquerors and tyrants; or the delegated power of those, who in difficult and factious times have gained over the minds of the populace to themselves, and balanced the interests and ambition of particulars against one another; it seems that little of use to public happiness can be drawn from these patterns, where the persons concerned were either very little solicitous about public happiness, or very little qualified to make a proper estimate of the best methods of attaining it, or, lastly, were obliged to comply with the prejudices, and established customs, of an ignorant head-strong multitude. The only pattern of great use and authority appears to be the *Jewish* Theocracy. As to the fictitious supposition, that a set of philosophers, with all their natural rights about them, agree to give up certain of these, in order to preserve the rest, and promote the good of the whole, this is too large a field. Besides, public good must either be made the criterion of natural rights, and of the obligation to give them up, &c. which would bring this hypothesis to coincide with

with the direct obvious considerations above-mentioned; or, if any other criterion be assumed, the determinations will be false. This method of reasoning has been adopted too servilely, by the force which association has over the human mind, from the technical methods of extending human laws to cases not provided for explicitly, and particularly from the reasonings made use of in the civil law. However, the writers of this class have delivered many excellent particular precepts, in relation to the duties both of public and of private life; and therefore have deserved well of the world, notwithstanding that their foundation for the laws of nature and nations be liable to the foregoing objections.

Secondly, It is said, that there are certain cases, in which open resistance is lawful. And it must be owned, that where there is no oath of allegiance, or where that oath is plainly conditional, cases may be put, where resistance with all its consequences seems more likely to produce public good, than non-resistance. If therefore a man can lay his hand upon his heart, and fairly declare, that he is not influenced by ambition, self-interest, envy, resentment, &c. but merely by tenderness and good-will to the public, I cannot presume to say, that he is to be restrained, or that christianity, that *perfect law of liberty*, whose end is *peace and good-will to men*, should be made an obstruction to any truly benevolent endeavours, where christian *liberty* is not made use of as *a cloak for maliciousness*. But these cases are so rare, that it is needless to give any rules about them. In public disturbances, when men's passions are up, there are so many violences on all hands, that it is impossible to say, which side one would wish to have uppermost; only there is always a prejudice in favour of the last establishment, because the minds of the multitude may be quieted sooner by getting into the former road.

road. Rules of this kind can only be supposed to relate to those that are disposed to obey them, which are very few in comparison. If one could suppose, that all would obey implicitly, no disturbance could arise; if all disobey, it is infinite anarchy. Therefore, of all the intermediate suppositions, those seem to be the best, in which most obey. In short, it appears to be the duty of a good christian to sit still, and suffer the children of this world to dispute and fight about it; only submitting himself to the powers in being, whatever they are (they cannot be entitled to less regard than the heathen emperors, to whom the apostles enjoined obedience) for the sake of peace and quietness to himself and others; and, as much as in him lies, moderating the heats and animosities of parties against each other. However, I do not mean, that those who, according to the constitution of a government, have an executive or legislative power lodged with them, should not exert it with authority. As to the case of oaths, no view of public good can be sufficient to supersede so sacred an obligation. And thus it is not only allowed to, but even required of, a good christian, to be active in the defence of an establishment, to which he has given an oath to that purpose.

Other rules, besides the ten foregoing, might be assigned, or these expressed in a different way. I have put down those which appear to me to be, in fact, the chief principles of social conduct to wise and good men. They must all be supposed to influence and interpret each other. Let a man only divest himself of all self-regards, as much as possible, and love his neighbour as himself, and God above all, and he will generally find some point, and that without much difficulty or perplexity, in which all these rules unite to produce the greatest good, upon the whole, to all the persons concerned.

I proceed

I proceed next to consider briefly the several principal relations of life, and the duties arising from them, according to the foregoing or such like rules.

The first of these is that of husband and wife. The loving our neighbour as ourselves begins here. This is the first instance of it; and, where this love is mutual and perfect, there an entire equality of the two sexes takes place. The authority of the man is only a mark of our present degenerate state, by reason of which dominion must be placed somewhere, and therefore in the man, as being of greater bodily strength and firmness of mind. But this is that kind of right or property, which men are obliged to give up, though women are also obliged to acknowledge it. Suppose the sexes to share all their joys and griefs perfectly, to have an entire concern for each other, and especially for each other's eternal welfare, and they are, as it were, reinstated in paradise; and the dominion of the man over the woman, with her subjection, and consequent reluctance, can only take place again upon their mutual transgression. And though in this imperfect state it seems impossible, from the theory above given, for any one to love another, in every branch of desire and happiness, entirely as himself; yet there appear to be such near approaches to it in benevolent, devout, married persons, united upon right motives, as to annihilate all considerable, or even perceptible distinction. It is of the utmost importance, that this grand foundation of all benevolence be duly laid, on account both of public and private happiness. The chief or only means of doing this is religion. Where both parties have it in a high degree, they cannot fail of mutual happiness; scarce, if one have it: where both are greatly defective in this principal article, it is almost impossible but dissensions, uneasiness, and mutual offences, should arise.

The



The second great relation of life is that of parents to children; the principal duty of which is the giving a right education, or the imprinting such associations upon the minds of children, as may conduct them safe through the labyrinths of this world to a happy futurity. Religion therefore here again appears to be the one only necessary thing. It is the design of the present chapter to shew, that it contributes as certainly to give us the *maximum* of happiness in this world, at least the fairest prospect of it, as to secure it in the next. So that a parent must be led to the inculcating virtue in every view. The chief errors in education are owing to the want of this persuasion in a practical way; or to a false tenderness and opinion of the parent, whereby he is led to believe, or flatter himself, that his child's nature is not so degenerate and corrupt, as to require frequent corrections and restraints, with perpetual encouragements and incentives to virtue by reward, example, advice, books, conversation, &c. Otherwise it would appear from the history of the mind, its affections and passions, before given, that few children would miscarry. Where due care is taken from the first, little severity would ordinarily be necessary; but, in proportion as this care is neglected in the first years, a much greater degree of care, with high degrees of severity both bodily and mental, become absolutely requisite to preserve from misery here and hereafter. We see that men of the ordinary standard in virtue are seldom brought to a state of repentance and salvation, without great sufferings, both bodily and mental, from diseases, sad external accidents, deaths of friends, loss of fortunes, &c. How then can it be supposed, that children can be brought into the right way, without analogous methods, both bodily and mental, though gentler indeed, in proportion as the child's age is more tender? And this ought to  
make

make all affectionate parents labour from the earliest dawnings of understanding and desire, to check the growing obstinacy of the will; curb all sallies of passion; impress the deepest, most amiable, reverential, and awful apprehensions of God, a future state, and all sacred things; restrain anger, jealousy, selfishness; encourage love, compassion, generosity, forgiveness, gratitude; excite, and even compel to, such industry as the tender age will properly admit. For one principal end and difficulty of life is to generate such moderate, varying, and perpetually actuating motives, by means of the natural sensible desires being associated with, and parcelled out upon foreign objects, as may keep up a state of moderate cheerfulness, and useful employment, during the whole course of our lives: whereas sensual, blind, an-uninformed desire presses violently for immediate gratification, is injurious to others, and destroys its own aims, or, at the best, gives way only to spleen and dissatisfaction.

As to the other duties towards children, such as care of their present and future health of body, provision of external necessities and conveniencies for them, &c. they are sufficiently obvious, and can scarce be neglected by those, who are truly solicitous about the principal point, a religious education.

The duties of children to parents are submission, obedience, gratitude even to the worst. For it can scarce be supposed, that children have not great obligations to their parents, upon the whole. And as the love of parents to children may serve to give parents a feeling conviction of the infinite benevolence of God our heavenly Father, so the submission of children to parents is the pattern of, and introduction to, true religion; and therefore is of infinite importance to be duly paid. Which may serve as an admonition both to parents, to shew themselves fit vicegerents

vicegerents of God, and to children to give them the respect due to them as such.

As the reciprocal duties between parents and children are patterns of the reciprocal duties between superiors and inferiors of all kinds; so the duties and affections between brethren and sisters are our guides and monitors in respect of equals; both which things are intimated in these and such like scripture phrases; *intreat an elder as a father, the younger men as brethren; love as brethren*, &c. The several events of childhood, the conjunction of interests, the examples of others, &c. impress upon us a greater concern, love, compassion, &c. for all persons nearly related to us in blood, than for others in like circumstances. And though the ultimate ratio of duty is to love every man equally, because we are to love every man as ourselves; yet since our condition here keeps us in some degree the necessary slaves of self-love, it follows that neither ought we to love all persons equally, but our relations, friends, and enemies, preferably to utter strangers; lest, in endeavouring to love all equally, we come not to love others more, but our brethren less, than we did before.

The cleaving of our affections to all with whom we have frequent pleasing intercourses, with mutual obligations, is the foundation of friendship; which yet cannot subsist long, but amongst the truly religious. And great care ought to be taken here, not to have men's persons in admiration, not to esteem our friend a nonpareil. There is great pride and vanity in this, just as in the like opinions concerning ourselves, our children, possessions, &c. Such intimacies, by exalting one above measure in our love and esteem, must depress others; and they generally end in jealousies and quarrels, even between the two intimates. All men are frail and imperfect, and it is a great injury to any man, to think more highly of him than he deserves, and to treat him so. Our  
regards

regards cannot continue long strained up to an unnatural pitch. And if we consider, that we all have a proper business in life, which engages us in a variety of christian actions, and consequently of friendships and intimacies, this peculiar attachment of one person to another of the same sex will appear inconsistent with the duties of life. Where the sexes are different, such an attachment is either with a view to marriage, or else it becomes liable to still greater objections.

As to enemies, the forgiving them, praying for them, doing them good offices, compassion to them as exposing themselves to sufferings by a wrong behaviour, the sense of our having injured them, which is generally the case more or less, &c. have in generous and religious men a peculiar tendency to excite love and compassion for them.

The last relation which I shall consider is that of magistrates, *i. e.* the persons who in each society have the legislative or executive powers, or both, committed to them. The duty arising from this relation may be distinguished into two branches. First, That towards the persons over whom the magistrate presides; secondly, that towards other states.

In respect of the first, we may at once affirm, that the principal care of a magistrate, of the father of a people, is to encourage and enforce benevolence and piety, the belief and practice of natural and revealed religion; and to discourage and restrain infidelity, profaneness, and immorality, as much as possible. And this,

First, Because the concerns of another world are of infinitely greater importance than any relating to this; so that he who wishes well to a people, and presides over them for their good, cannot but be chiefly solicitous and industrious in this particular.

Secondly, Because even the present well-being of states depends entirely upon the private virtues of the



several ranks and orders of men. For the public happiness is compounded of the happiness of the several individuals composing the body politic; and the virtues of industry, temperance, chastity, meekness, justice, generosity, devotion, resignation, &c. have a tendency to promote the happiness both of the persons that possess them, and of others.

It will therefore be the duty of the magistrate, in making and executing laws, to inquire which method appears to be most conducive to virtue in the people, to pursue this simply and steadily, and not to doubt but that all the subordinate ends of government, as those of increasing the riches and power of the state, promoting arts and sciences, &c. will be obtained in such degrees as they ought, as are productive of real happiness to the people, by the same means. But where it is doubtful what method is most conducive to virtue, there the subordinate ends are to be taken into consideration, each according to its value: just as in the case of self-interest in individuals; where benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, are entirely silent, there cool, rational self-interest may, and, as it appears, ought to be admitted as a principle of action.

As to foreign states, they, and consequently the magistrates who preside over them, are under the same obligations, as private persons are in respect of each other. Thus, since a private person, in order to obtain his own greatest happiness, even in this world, must obey the precepts of benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, with an absolute and implicit confidence in them; so states, *i. e.* their governors or representatives, ought to deal with each other according to justice, generosity, charity, &c. even from the mere principle of interest. For the reason is the same in both cases. If individuals be all members of the same mystical body, much more  
are

are states, *i. e.* large collections of individuals. They ought therefore to have the same care for each other, as for themselves; and whoever is an aggressor, or injurious, must expect to suffer, as in private life. *They that take the sword shall perish by the sword. He that leadeth into captivity must go into captivity. Babylon must receive double for all her insults upon other nations, &c.* All which is verified by observation, both in regard to private persons, and to states, as far as it is reasonable for us to expect to see it verified, in this our ignorance of the real quantities of virtue and vice, and of happiness and misery. But in all observations of this kind we ought constantly to bear in mind, that God's judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out, in particular cases, though sufficiently manifest in the general course and tenor of things. By the last he shews us his moral attributes, his providence, and his relation to us as our governor; by the first he humbles the pride, rashness, and self-conceit, of human understanding.

It may not perhaps be improper here to say something concerning the lawfulness of war. Now this regards either the magistrate, or the subject. First, then, it is very evident, that as private persons are, in general, prohibited by the law of Christ to revenge themselves, resist evil, &c. so are states, and consequently, magistrates. But then as private persons have, under christianity, that *perfect law of liberty*, a power to punish injuries done to themselves, oppose violence offered to themselves, &c. when their view in this is a sincere regard to others, as affected by these injuries and violences, so magistrates have a power, and by consequence lie under an obligation, of the like kind, where the real motive is tenderness to their own people in a just cause, or a regard to the general welfare of their own state, and the neighbouring ones. Se-

condly, Though it seems entirely unjustifiable for private persons to enter upon the profession of war wantonly, and with a view to riches, honours, &c. especially since so much violence and cruelty, and so many temptations, attend this profession; yet where a person is already engaged, and has very urgent reasons restraining him from withdrawing, or receives a particular command from a lawful magistrate, it seems to be allowable, or even his duty.

## SECT. VII.

OF THE REGARD DUE TO THE PLEASURES  
AND PAINS OF THEOPATHY IN FORMING  
THE RULE OF LIFE.

### PROP. LXXI.

*The Love of God regulates, improves, and perfects all the other Parts of our Nature; and affords a Pleasure superior in Kind and Degree to all the rest: it is therefore our primary Pursuit, and ultimate End.*

IN what manner the precepts of piety regulate, improve, and perfect the four inferior classes of pleasure, viz. those of sensation, imagination, ambition, and self-interest, has been shewn already in this chapter. But the precepts of piety are those which teach us, what homage of our affections, and external actions, ought to be addressed to the Deity in a direct and immediate manner; and it will appear under the two next propositions, in which the affections and actions enjoined by piety are particularly considered, that all these terminate ultimately in the love of God, and are absorbed by it: the love of God does therefore regulate, improve, and perfect all the four inferior classes of pleasure.

The same thing is evident with respect to the whole of our natures, in a shorter manner, and according to the usual sense, in which the phrase of the *love of God* is taken. For the perpetual exertion of a pleasing affection towards a being infinite in power, knowledge, and goodness, and who is also our friend and father, cannot but enhance all our joys, and alleviate all our sorrows; the sense of his



presence and protection will restrain all actions, that are excessive, irregular, or hurtful; support and encourage us in all such as are of a contrary nature; and infuse such peace and tranquillity of mind, as will enable us to see clearly, and act uniformly. The perfection therefore of every part of our natures must depend upon the love of God, and the constant comfortable sense of his presence.

With respect to benevolence, or the love of our neighbour, it may be observed, that this can never be free from partiality and selfishness, till we take our station in the divine nature, and view every thing from thence, and in the relation which it bears to God. If the relation to ourselves be made the point of view, our prospect must be narrow, and the appearance of what we do see distorted. When we consider the scenes of folly, vanity, and misery, which must present themselves to our sight in this point; when we are disappointed in the happiness of our friends, or feel the resentment of our enemies; our benevolence will begin to languish, and our hearts to fail us; we shall complain of the corruption and wickedness of that world, which we have hitherto loved with a benevolence merely human; and shew by our complaints, that we are still deeply tinctured with the same corruption and wickedness. This is generally the case with young and unexperienced persons, in the beginning of a virtuous course, and before they have made a due advancement in the ways of piety. Human benevolence, though *sweet in the mouth*, is *bitter in the belly*; and the disappointments which it meets with, are sometimes apt to incline us to call the divine goodness in question. But he who is possessed of a full assurance of this, who loves God with his whole powers, as an inexhaustible fountain of love and beneficence to all his creatures, at all times, and in all places, as much when he chastises, as when he rewards, will  
learn

learn thereby to love enemies, as well as friends; the sinful and miserable, as well as the holy and happy; to rejoice, and give thanks, for every thing which he sees and feels, however irreconcilable, to his present suggestions; and to labour, as an instrument under God, for the promotion of virtue and happiness, with real courage and constancy, *knowing that his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

In like manner, the moral sense requires a perpetual direction and support from the love of God, in order to keep it steady and pure. When men cease to regard God in a due measure, and to make him their ultimate end, having some other end, beyond which they do not look, they are very apt to relapse into negligence and callosity, and to act without any virtuous principle; and, on the other hand, if they often look up to him, but not with a filial love and confidence, those *weighty matters of the law*, they *tithe mint, anise, and cumin*, and fill themselves with endless scruples and anxieties about the lawfulness and unlawfulness of trivial actions: whereas he who loves God with all his heart, cannot but have a constant care not to offend him, at the same time that his amiable notions of God, and the consciousness of his love and sincerity towards him, are such a fund of hope and joy, as precludes all scruples that are unworthy of the divine goodness, or unsuitable to our present state of frailty and ignorance.

We are next to shew, that the love of God affords a pleasure which is superior in kind and degree to all the rest, of which our natures are capable. Now this will appear,

First, *Because God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all*; because he is *love* itself, such love as quite *casts out all fear*. The love and contemplation of his perfection and happiness will transform us into his likeness, into that image of him in which

we were first made; will make us *partakers of the divine nature*, and consequently of the perfection and happiness of it. Our wills may thus be united to his will, and therefore rendered free from disappointments; we shall, by degrees, see every thing as God sees it, *i. e.* see every thing that he has made to be good, to be an object of pleasure. It is true, that all this, in its perfect sense, in its ultimate ratio, can only be said by way of anticipation: whilst we carry these fleshly tabernacles about with us, we must have crosses to bear, frailties, and thorns in the flesh, to struggle with. But still our strength will at last be made perfect through weakness; and some devout persons appear to have been so far transformed, in this life, as to acquiesce, and even rejoice, in the events of it, however afflicting apparently, to be freed from fear and solicitude, and to receive their daily bread with constant thankfulness, *with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*. And though the number of these happy persons has probably been very small comparatively, though the path be not frequented and beaten; yet we may assure ourselves, that it is in the power of all to arrive at the same state, if their love and devotion be sufficiently earnest. All other loves, with all their defilements and idolatries, will die away in due order and proportion, in the heart, which yields itself to God: for they are all impure and idolatrous, except when considered as the methods appointed by God to beget in us the love of himself: they all leave stains; have a mixture of evil, as well as of good; they must all be tried and purified by the fire of his love, and pass thereby from human to divine.

Secondly, God is our centre, and the love of him a pleasure superior to all the rest, not only on account of the mixture of pain in all the rest, as shewn in the last paragraph, but also because they all point to it, like so many lines terminating in the same centre.

When

When men have entered sufficiently into the ways of piety, God appears more and more to them in the whole course and tenor of their lives; and by uniting himself with all their sensations, and intellectual perceptions, overpowers all the pains; augments, and attracts to himself, all the pleasures. Every thing sweet, beautiful, or glorious, brings in the idea of God, mixes with it, and vanishes into it. For all is God's; he is the only cause and reality; and the existence of every thing else is only the effect, pledge, and proof, of his existence and glory. Let the mind be once duly seasoned with this truth, and its practical applications, and every the most indifferent thing will become food for religious meditation, a book of devotion, and a psalm of praise. And when the purity and perfection of the pleasures of theopathy, set forth in the last article, are added to their unlimited extent, as it appears in this, it is easy to see, that they must be far superior to all the rest both in kind and degree. We may see also, that the frame of our nature, and particularly its subjection to the power of association, has an obvious and necessary tendency to make the love of God, in fact, superior to our other affections. If we suppose creatures subject to the law of association to be placed in the midst of a variety of pleasures and pains, the sum total of the first being greater than that of the last, and to connect God with each as its sole cause, pain will be overpowered by pleasure, and the indefinite number of compound pleasures resulting from association be at last united entirely with the idea of God. And this our ultimate happiness will be accelerated or retarded, according as we apply ourselves more or less to the cultivation of the devout affections, to reading, and meditation upon divine subjects, to prayer and praise. Thus we shall the sooner learn to join with the angels, and *spirits of just men made perfect*, in ascribing power, and riches, and wisdom,



*wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, and every associated lustre, to their true fountain, to God and the Lamb.*

Thirdly, As all the other pleasures have a mixture of pain and impurity in them, and are all evidently means, not ends, so are the objects of them frequently taken from us; whereas no time, place, or circumstance of life, can deprive us of, no height, depth, or creature of any kind, can separate us from, the love of God. Our hearts may be turned to him in the greatest external confusion, as well as in the deepest silence and retirement. All the duties of life, when directed to God, become pleasures; and by the same means, every the smallest action becomes the discharge of the proper duty of the time and place. Thus we may redeem our time, and turn it to the best advantage; thus we may convert every situation and event of life into present comfort, and future felicity.

Fourthly, When the love of God is made thus to arise from every object, and to exert itself in every action, it becomes of a permanent nature, suitable to our present frame; and will not pass into deadness and disgust, as our other pleasures do from repeated gratification.

It is true indeed, that novices in the ways of piety and devotion are frequently, and more experienced persons sometimes, affected with spiritual aridity and dejection; but then this seems to be either from pride, or spiritual selfishness, *i. e.* from the impurity of their love to God. They give themselves up perhaps to raptures, and extatic transports, from the present pleasures which they afford, to the neglect of the great duties of life, of charity, friendship, industry; or they think themselves the peculiar favourites of heaven on account of these raptures; and despise and censure others, as of inferior classes, in the school of piety. Now these violent agitations of  
the

the brain cannot recur often without passing out of the limits of pleasure into those of pain; and particularly into the mental pains of moroseness, jealousy, fear, dejection, and melancholy. Both the greatness and the sameness of the pleasures concur, as in other cases, to convert them into pains. But it does not appear, that those who seek God in all his works, and receive all the pleasures and pains which the order of his providence offers, with thankfulness, and fidelity in their duty, as coming from his hand, would either want that variety, or that temperature, which in our present state is necessary to make the love of God a perpetual fund of joy. And it seems peculiarly proper to remark here, that if the primitive christians, instead of retiring into deserts, caves, and cells, for the cultivation of speculative devotion, had continued to shew forth and practise the love of God by exposing themselves to all such difficulties and dangers, as had arisen in the incessant propagation of the everlasting gospel, to *every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people*, they would perhaps have rejoiced evermore, even in the greatest tribulations, as the apostles, and their immediate followers, who *kept their first love*, seem to have done; also that the present and future generations of christians can never be delivered from superstitious fears and anxieties, from dryness, scrupulosity, and dejection, till they *go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*, according to our Saviour's last command. However, till this happy time comes, the alloy of the pleasures of theopathy with pain serves to remind us of our fallen state, and of the greatness of our fall, since our primary and purest pleasures are subject to such an alloy; and thus, learning compassion, humility, and submission to God, we shall be exalted thereby, and, after we have *suffered a while, be perfected, stablished, strengthened, settled*.

## P R O P. LXXII.

*To deduce practical Rules concerning the Theopathic Affections, Faith, Fear, Gratitude, Hope, Trust, Resignation, and Love.*

## OF FAITH IN GOD.

THE first of the theopathic affections is faith. *He that cometh to God must believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* But this faith is of very different degrees, even in those who equally acknowledge their belief of the existence of God, and agree in their expressions concerning his nature and attributes, according as their ideas of this kind are more or less vivid and perfect, and recur more or less frequently in the events of life. It is probable indeed, that no man, especially in a christian country, can be utterly devoid of faith. The impression made upon us in infancy, our conversation afterwards, the books that we read, and the wonders of the visible world, all concur to generate ideas of the power and knowledge of God at least, and to excite such degrees of fear, as give a reality to the ideas, and extort so much of assent, that the most professed atheists, did they reflect upon what passes in their thoughts, and declare it sincerely, could not but acknowledge, that at certain times they are like *the devils*, who *believe and tremble*. After these come the persons who dare not but own God in words, who have few or no objections to his nature and attributes, or who can even produce many arguments and demonstrations in favour of them; and yet put away the thoughts of God as much as they are able. The next degree is of such as try to *serve God and mammon* together in various proportions; till at last we come to those, whose *heart is perfect before God*, who love him with all their powers,

powers, and *walk in his presence* continually. Now this last state of faith is that which the scripture puts as equivalent to our whole duty : for in this last state it comprehends, and coincides with, all the other theopathic affections, when they are likewise carried to their ultimate perfection. In their first rise they all differ from one another ; in their last state they all unite together, and may be expressed by the name of any single one, when supposed perfect ; though the most usual, proper, and emphatic appellation seems to be the phrase of *the love of God*, as before noted. Let us now inquire by what methods men may be most accelerated in their progress from the first dawning of faith in infancy to its ultimate perfection.

First, then, An early acquaintance with the scriptures, and the constant study of them, is the principal means whereby this faith is first to be generated, and afterwards improved and perfected. God taught mankind before the flood, and for some ages afterwards, his existence, nature, and attributes, by express revelation ; and therefore it cannot but be the proper method for begetting faith in children, who are more ignorant, and unqualified for rational deductions, than adults in the rudest ages of the world, to initiate them early in the records of religion. And though afterwards *the invisible things of God* may be known by the visible creation, yet the miracles delivered in the scriptures have a peculiar tendency to awaken the attention, and to add that force, lustre, and veneration, to our ideas of God, and his attributes, which are the causes and concomitants of assent or faith, according to the theory of these papers. The same thing holds of the prophecies, precepts, promises, and threatenings, of the scriptures, in their respective degrees ; and it seems, in a manner, impossible for any one to be perpetually conversant in them, without this happy influence. All those persons therefore, who are so far



far advanced in faith, as to cry out with the father of the lunatic in the gospel, *Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief*; ought, in consequence of this prayer, to apply themselves to the daily study of, and meditation upon, the scriptures. To which it is to be added, that as faith in Christ is also necessary, as well as faith in the one God and Father of all, and can be learnt no other way than from the scriptures, we ought upon this account also to esteem them as the principal means, which God has put in our power, for the generation and improvement of our faith: *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Secondly, To the study of the word of God must be joined that of his works. They are in all things analogous to each other, and are perpetual comments upon each other. I do not mean, that a man must be a deep philosopher, in order to have faith in God; for, on the contrary, philosophical researches, when pursued from curiosity or ambition, are *vain deceit*, and lead people to *make shipwreck of faith*. I would only recommend to every person, according to his knowledge and abilities, to consider the works of God as his works; to refer all the power, wisdom, and goodness in them, to him, as the sole fountain of these; and to dwell upon the vastness, the lustre, the beauty, the beneficence, which are obvious to vulgar as well as philosophic eyes, till such time as they have raised devotion in the heart. Such exercises would greatly assist to overcome that gloominess and scepticism, which sometimes hang about our conceptions of the invisible world, and by their reiterated impressions generate the causes of assent. We have examples of this in the Old Testament, particularly in the *Psalms*; and the writers do not seem to have been eminent for any peculiar depth in curious inquiries. Men of the ordinary ranks in life in these times have as much probably of the mysteries of  
nature

nature unfolded to them, as great saints in ancient times; so that they want nothing to enable them to draw the same faith and devotion from the works of creation, but the same earnest desire to do it.

Thirdly, An upright heart, and a sincere endeavour to do our whole duty, are necessary to support our faith, after it is generated. While any sin remains unconquered, while there are any secret misgivings, the idea of God will be so uneasy to the mind, as not to recur frequently; men will seek for refuge in vain amusements; and the false hopes of this world will exclude the real ones of another, and make religion appear like a dream. This is the case with far the greatest part of mankind; they *live rather by sight than faith*; and are not sufficiently aware, that *a little leaven leavens the whole lump*, and that one favourite pursuit of this world totally eclipses those glories of the other, that sight of *the invisible God*, which the *pure in heart*, like *Moses*, are favoured with. The same partiality of our obedience and devotion is the cause, that the writings of the Old and New Testaments do not at once convince all, who peruse them, of their divine authority, and of the consequent truth of revealed religion. We judge of the frame of men's minds by that of our own, as appears from the theory of association; and whatever differs in a great degree from our own, puts on the appearance of something romantic and incredible. This is evident in the daily intercourses of human life. Corrupt and designing men put the falsest and most unnatural constructions upon the actions of the bulk of mankind, and often deceive themselves thereby; and the bulk of mankind are quite at a loss to conceive and believe the possibility of very heroic, generous, pious actions. And thus profane men turn into ridicule passages in the scriptures, which demand the highest admiration and applause; and men of inferior degrees of goodness, though they do

do not assent to this, are a little staggered at it. But they who *will do the will* of God, will soon perceive the *doctrine* of the scriptures to be *from him*; they who will press forward to the perfection of *Moses, Daniel, St. Peter, or St. Paul*, will not only acquit them readily of the charge of enthusiasm and imposture, but will also see and feel experimentally such unquestionable criterions of truth, such a reality, in their words and actions, as will dispel all the mists of scepticism and infidelity, with regard either to natural or revealed religion.

It is much to be wished, that these things were seriously weighed, and laid to heart, by those half-pious persons, who abstain from gross sins, and *seek, though they do not strive, to enter in at the strait gate, who are not far from the kingdom of God*. These persons might, by a little more attention to the word and works of God in a practical way, and *casting away the sin that does most easily beset them*, not only arrive at that *full assurance of faith*, which is our greatest happiness in this world, and the earnest of an eternal crown hereafter, but also *let their light so shine before men, as that they, seeing their good works, would glorify their Father, which is in heaven*.

#### OF THE FEAR OF GOD.

The immediate consequence of faith in God, in its imperfect state, is fear. And though love does arise also, yet it is faint and transient for a long time, whereas the fear is strong and vivid, and recurs generally with every recollection of the divine attributes. The cause of all this is unfolded in these papers. For, fear being the offspring of bodily pain, and this being much more acute than bodily pleasure, the parent of love, it follows that fear must, in general, be stronger than love in their nascent state. The august ideas of infinite time and space, of the glories of heaven, and the torments of hell,  
of

of the great works of the creation, &c. which accompany the idea of God, farther contribute to agitate the mind, and to carry it within the limits of pain or fear. At the same time we see, that these terrifying ideas, when mixed with those which generate love, and moderated by frequent recurrency, and other means, so as to fall back within the limits of pleasure, must greatly increase our love, and other pleasing affections, exerted towards the Deity. We are to inquire therefore, both how the fear of God may most effectually be generated, and how it may be converted most speedily into love and delight in God. And the answer will be, that we must make use of the means before recommended for the generation and increase of faith, viz. the study of the word and works of God, and a sincere endeavour to discharge the whole of our duty.

That the last is necessary to keep up the fear of God, may appear, inasmuch as those who continue to disobey, must, by degrees, fall into insensibility and callosity; the frequent returns of the ideas of guilt and fear make them sit easier upon the mind, at the same time that the remaining uneasiness keeps these ideas, with all their associates, out of view, in a great measure, as has been mentioned already.

#### OF GRATITUDE TOWARDS GOD.

Gratitude or thankfulness to God arises from the recollection of benefits received, just as that to men. And if we could see and feel practically and perpetually, that God is the sole spring of all action, our gratitude to God would absorb all kinds and degrees of it paid to men. Could we also look with the eye of faith into futurity, and be convinced really, that *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what things God has prepared for such as love him, that all things work together for their good*, trials and afflictions as



much, or more than any thing else, that every creature shall love, and bless, and praise God at last, and every one partake of the happiness of all the rest, whilst yet we all, who are thus heirs of an excess of glory, perfection, and happiness, are creatures of yesterday, called forth from nothing by God's almighty word; if, farther, we consider, that the Son of God became flesh, took our infirmities and sorrows, and at last died for us, God condescending thus to recommend and evidence his infinite love to us; our hearts could not but overflow with such gratitude, as even to overpower our faith for a while. We should then acknowledge, that all we are, and have, and hope for, are from him; we should praise him for all the blessings past, present, and future, which we receive in our own persons, or in those of our fellow-creatures; and desire nothing so ardently, as to be admitted into his presence, and the society of those happy beings, who rest not day and night, saying *holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

OF HOPE AND TRUST IN GOD, AND  
RESIGNATION TO HIS WILL.

Hope and trust in God differ only in degree, the last being a firmer hope, and, as it were, an assurance of the favour of God to ourselves in particular; and that he will provide for all our wants. Resignation is the same hope and trust exerted, notwithstanding that present appearances may be contrary thereto: it is the submission of our own wills and judgments to God's, with an entire confidence in his care and goodness. Let us endeavour to place this hope, trust, and resignation, upon a sure foundation, laid in the word and works of God.

First, then, The scriptures give the strongest and plainest assurances, that all those who love and obey God here, will be admitted to pure, exalted, and eternal happiness at the expiration of this life. If  
therefore

therefore *our hearts do not condemn us*, we may have *this confidence in him*; we may have an entire hope and trust in him, as to the most weighty of all points, our eternal salvation. And though natural reason could not have discovered this inestimable hope to us, though it was not able *to bring life and immortality to light*, Christ being the only *sure and steadfast anchor* of that hope, which reaches *beyond the veil* of death; yet it readily concurs with all the scripture declarations of this kind, and even affords a comfortable probability of itself, after we have once been enlightened by revelation.

Secondly, The scriptures, the voice of reason, and careful observation, all concur to assure us, that a secret providence attends upon the good; protects and blesses them in the events of the present life, ordinary and extraordinary; delivers them in great trials and afflictions; and disposes every incident and circumstance in such a manner, as they would wish and desire for themselves, could they judge aright, and take the whole of things into their view. Now the full persuasion of this would be a most endearing motive to trust and confidence in God. For the things of this life, however inconsiderable when compared to those of another, do most sensibly affect even good men; and, till they can arrive at a due indifference to this world, it is highly requisite, that they should turn their excess of sensibility into a motive to gratitude and trust.

Thirdly, The assurance that all our afflictions are the chastisements of our heavenly Father, and equally productive of happiness with the other events of our lives, as mentioned in the last paragraph, enables us to resign ourselves. The highest act of this kind is, for the most part, in the article of death, when we are surrounded with infirmity, pain, and darkness, and when all inferior comforts must be given up. Now this theopathic affection of

Y 2

resignation,

resignation, though it is in its first state painful, and difficult to corrupt nature; yet in its progress it becomes easy, and at last affords the deepest peace and satisfaction. By resigning all, we are delivered from every anxiety and disquietude, and enter upon the next period of our existence, with an impartiality and freedom, that qualifies us to enjoy whatever the order of providence bestows. And unless we were exercised with some trials and temptations of this kind, unless our wills were sometimes disappointed, we should at last be swallowed up by mere wilfulness, and pursue every object of desire with an unconquerable eagerness and obstinacy: we should also idolize ourselves, as the authors of our success and blessings; or, at the utmost, should look no farther than the course of nature, and blind unmeaning fate; whereas by learning a ready compliance with the will of God, however unexpected, we become partakers of his happiness; for his will can never be disappointed.

Fourthly, Those persons who believe the goodness of God, according to the third of the suppositions before-mentioned, *i. e.* who believe that he will advance all his creatures to unlimited happiness ultimately, may much more easily resign themselves to God, in all respects, spiritual as well as temporal, on that account. But it appears, that very pious persons have an entire resignation, without any distinct conception or belief of this hypothesis. They know and feel, as it were, that God is infinitely good, and that *the judge of all the earth must do right*; and, in this confidence, they leave the mysteries of his providence, his unsearchable judgments, to be unfolded in his own time, preserving themselves from disquietude by an humble religious scepticism. But if it should please God to display the riches of his mercy in the full discovery and establishment of the doctrine of universal restoration,

tion, in the latter times, which are now approaching, it will become us first to receive it with the highest gratitude, and then to use it as a means of accelerating our progress towards the absolute resignation of ourselves, and all our fellow-creatures, into the hands of God.

Fifthly, As the considerations contained in the four last paragraphs may contribute to beget hope, trust, and resignation in us, so all the foregoing theopathic affections, and particularly gratitude, with all the means of obtaining them, conspire to the same purpose, as will be easily seen.

#### OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

The love of God may be considered as the last of the theopathic affections, as before remarked; for they all end in it, and it is the sum total of them all. In its first rise, it must, like all the rest of them, resemble the sympathetic one of the same name; and thus it differs from the rest in *their* first rise, and is, as it were, contrary to fear. In its first rise it is often tinged with fondness and familiarity, and leans much towards enthusiasm; as, on the other hand, the fear is often at first a slavish superstitious dread. By degrees the fear and love qualify each other; and, by uniting with the other theopathic affections, they all together coalesce into a reverential, humble, filial love, attended with a peace, comfort, and joy, that pass all belief of those who have not experienced it; so that they look upon the discourses and writings of those who have, to be either hypocrisy, or romantic jargon. The book of *Psalms* affords the sublimest and most correct expressions of this kind, and can never be too much studied by those who would cherish, purify, and perfect in themselves a devout frame of mind. And this single circumstance, exclusive of all other considerations, appears to me a most convincing proof of

Y 3

the



the divine authority of this book, and consequently of the rest of the books of the Old and New Testament. But they have all the same evidence in their favour, in their respective degrees; they are all helps to beget in us the love of God, and tests whether we have it or no; and he who *meditates day and night in the law of God*, joining thereto the practical contemplation of his works, as prescribed by the scriptures, and the *purification of his hands and heart*, will soon arrive at that devout and happy state, which is signified by the love of God. I will here add some practical consequences resulting from what has been advanced concerning the theopathic affections.

First, then, Though an excess of passion of every kind, such as is not under the command of the voluntary power, is to be avoided, as dangerous and sinful; yet we must take care to serve God, with our affections, as well as our outward actions; and indeed, unless we do the first, we shall not long continue to do the last, the internal frame of our minds being the source and spring, from whence our external actions flow. God, who gives us all our faculties and powers, has a right to all; and it is a secret disloyalty and infidelity, not to pay the tribute of our affections. They are evidently in our power, immediately or mediately; and therefore he who goes to his profession, occupation, or amusements, with more delight and pleasure than to his exercises of devotion, his reading and meditation upon divine subjects, and his prayers and praises, whose *soul is not athirst for the living God*, and the *water of life*, may assuredly conclude, that he is not arrived at the requisite degree of perfection; that he still hankers after *mammon*, though he may have some real desires, and earnest resolutions, with respect to God.

Secondly,

Secondly, Though this be true in general, and a truth of the greatest practical importance; yet there are some seasons, in which all the theopathic affections, and many, in which those of the delightful kind, are languid, and that even in persons that are far advanced in purity and perfection. Thus the enthusiastic raptures, which often take place in the beginning of a religious course, by introducing an opposite state, disqualify some; a *Judaical* rigour and exactitude in long exercises, bodily disorders, &c. others, from feeling God to be their present joy and comfort. So that the fervours of devotion are by no means in exact proportion to the degree of advancement in piety; we can by no means make them a criterion of our own progress, or that of others. But then they are always some presumption; and it is far better, that they should have some mixture even of enthusiasm, than not take place at all. As to those, who are in the dry and dejected state, the fear of God is, for the most part, sufficiently vivid in them. Let them therefore frequently recollect, that the fear of God is a scripture criterion and seal of the elect, as well as love. Let them consider, that this trial must be submitted to, as much as any other, till *patience have her perfect work*; that it is more purifying than common trials; that the state of fear is far more safe, and a much stronger earnest of salvation, than premature and ecstatic transports; and that, if they continue faithful, it will end in love, probably during this life, certainly in another. Lastly, That no feeble minded person may be left without comfort, if there be any one who doubts whether he either loves or fears God, finding nothing but dullness, anxiety and scrupulosity, within him, he must be referred to his external actions, as the surest criterion of his real intentions, in this confused and disorderly state of the affections; and at the same

time admonished not to depend upon his external righteousness, which would breed an endless scrupulosity, and an endeavour after an useless exactitude, but to take refuge in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ.

Lastly, The cultivation of the love of God in ourselves by the methods here recommended, and all others that suit our state and condition, with a prudent caution to avoid enthusiasm on one hand, and superstition on the other, is the principal means for preserving us from dejection of every kind, and freeing us, if we be fallen into it. Worldly sorrows must by degrees die away, because worldly desires, their sources will. And this progress will be much accelerated by the impressions of a contrary nature, which gratitude, hope, love towards God, will make upon the mind. As to the dejection, which relates to another world, it generally ends, as has been frequently remarked already, in the opposite state, being its own remedy and cure; but all direct endeavours after the true and pure love of God must assist. It is much to be wished, that low-spirited persons of all kinds would open themselves without reserve to religious friends, and particularly to such as have passed through the same dark and dismal path themselves, and, distrusting their judgments, would resign themselves for a time to some person of approved experience and piety. These would be like guardian angels to them; and as our natures are so communicative, and susceptible of infection good and bad, they would by degrees infuse something of their own peaceable, cheerful, and devout spirit into them. But all human supports and comforts are to be at last resigned; we must have no *Comforter, no God, but one*; and happy are they who make haste towards this central point, in which alone we can find rest to our souls.

## SCHOLIUM.

If we consider the love of the world, the fear of God, and the love of God, in the first ratio which they bear to each other, it will appear, that the love of the world is infinitely greater than the fear of God, and the fear infinitely greater than the love; so that the fear of God is a middle proportional between the love of the world and the love of God, in the first or nascent ratio of these affections. In like manner, if we take their last ratio, or that in which the love of the world, and the fear of God, vanish into the love of God, the love of the world will be infinitely less than the fear of God, and the fear infinitely less than the love; so that the fear of God will still be a middle proportional between the love of the world and the love of God. Let us suppose the fear of God to be a middle proportional between the love of the world and the love of God in all the intermediate states of these affections, from their first rise in infancy, till their ultimate absorption and evanescence in the love of God, and see how this supposition will tally with experience, and how each affection varies in respect of the other two. Call therefore the love of the world  $W$ , the fear of God  $F$ , and the love of God  $L$ . Since then  $W : F :: F : L$ ,  $W = \frac{F^2}{L}$ .

If now  $F$  be supposed to remain the same  $W :: \frac{1}{L}$ , *i. e.* every diminution of the love of the world will increase the love of God, and *vice versa*; so that, if the love of the world be nothing, the love of God will be infinite, also infinitely greater than the fear, *i. e.* we shall be infinitely happy. If, on the contrary, the love of the world be greater than the love of God, the fear will also be greater than it, and our religion be chiefly anxiety and superstition. If, farther,  $F$ , supposed still to remain the same, be greater than  $W$ , it is our truest



truest interest to diminish  $W$  as much as we can, because then the gain in  $L$  is far greater than the loss in  $W$ . If  $L$  remain the same, then  $W = F^2$ , *i. e.* every increase of  $W$  will increase  $F$  also, *i. e.* every increase of the love of the world will increase the fear of God, which therefore, since the love is not increased by supposition, must incline to a superstitious dread: as, on the contrary, if  $W$  vanishes,  $F$  must vanish also, *i. e.* the love of the world and fear being both annihilated, we shall receive pure happiness, of a finite degree, from the love of God. If  $W$  remain the same, then  $F^2 :: L$ , *i. e.* every accession made to the fear of God will be the cause of a greater accession to the love, and every accession to the love the cause of only a less accession to the fear, *i. e.* we shall be gainers upon the whole by all motives either to the fear or love of God, losers by all contrary motives. For if  $F$  be supposed even infinite,  $L$  will be infinito-infinite, *i. e.* will absorb it infinitely; and if  $F$  be infinitesimal,  $L$  will be infinito-infinitesimal, *i. e.* we shall become mere selfish worldlings which is the case with those practical atheists, who succeed in their endeavours to put God, and a future state, out of their thoughts, that they may give themselves up to this world.  $W$  now occupies the place of  $L$ , and extinguishes both  $F$  and it, *i. e.* self and the world are their God. Upon the whole, it follows from this speculation concerning the quantities  $W$ ,  $F$ , and  $L$ , that  $W$  ought to be diminished, and  $F$  and  $L$  to be increased, as much as possible, that so  $W$  may be indefinitely less than  $F$ , and  $F$  indefinitely less than  $L$ , *i. e.* we ourselves indefinitely happy in the love of God, by the previous annihilation of self and the world. And it may not perhaps be quite useless to have represented this most important of all conclusions, with the steps that lead to it, in this new and compendious light.

P R O P.

## P R O P. LXXIII.

*To deduce practical Rules concerning the Manner of expressing the theopathic Affections by Prayer, and other religious Exercises.*

THERE cannot be a more fatal delusion, than to suppose, that religion is nothing but a divine philosophy in the soul; and that the foregoing theopathic affections may exist and flourish there, though they be not cultivated by devout exercises and expressions. Experience, and many plain obvious reasons, shew the falsehood and mischievous tendency of this notion; and the theory of these papers may furnish us with other reasons to the same purpose, of a deeper and more subtle nature. It follows from this theory, that no internal dispositions can remain long in the mind, unless they be perpetually nourished by proper associations, *i. e.* by some external acts. This therefore may be considered as a strong argument for frequent prayer.

But, Secondly, Though God be in himself infinite in power, knowledge, goodness, and happiness, *i. e.* acquainted with all our wants, ready and able to supply them, and incapable of change through our entreaties and importunities; yet, as he represents himself to us both in his word and works in the relation of a father and governor, our associated nature compels us, as it were, to apply to him in the same way as we do to earthly fathers and governors; and, by thus compelling us, becomes a reason for so doing. If God's incomprehensible perfection be supposed to exclude prayer, it will equally exclude all thoughts and discourses concerning him; for these are all equally short and unworthy of him; which is direct atheism.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Though the hypothesis of mechanism may seem at first sight to make prayer superfluous and useless; yet, upon farther consideration, it will be found quite otherwise. For if all things be conducted mechanically, *i. e.* by means; then prayer may be the means of procuring what we want. Our ignorance of the manner in which things operate, is not the least evidence against their having a real operation. If all be conducted mechanically, some means must be made use of for procuring our wants. The analogy of all other things intimates, that these means must proceed in part from man. The analogy taken from the relations of father and governor suggests prayer. It follows therefore, according to the mechanical hypothesis, that prayer is one of the principal means, whereby we may obtain our desires.

Fourthly, If all these reasons were set aside, the pressing nature of some of our wants would extort prayers from us, and therefore justify them.

Fifthly, In like manner, the theopathic affections, if they be sufficiently strong, will break forth into prayers and praises, as in the authors of the *Psalms*, and other devout persons.

Lastly, The scriptures direct and command us to pray, *to pray always, in every thing to give thanks*; and support the foregoing and such like reasons for prayer and praise. And this removes all doubt and scruple, if any should remain from the infinite nature and majesty of God. We may be satisfied from the scriptures, that we have the privilege to pray, to expose all our wants, desires, joys, and griefs, to our Creator; and that he will hear us, and help us.

As to the time, manner, and requisites of prayer, we may make the following observations.

First, That words are of great use in the most private prayer, because of the associations transferred upon them, and which therefore they excite in the mind.

mind. But then, as there are internal sentiments and combinations of these, to which no words can correspond, we must not confine the noble privilege of prayer and praise to our languages, which are the offspring of the confusion at *Babel*. There are therefore proper seasons and occasions for mental prayer, for the tendency and aspiration of the heart to God without words, as well as for vocal prayer. And indeed all private vocal prayer seems to admit of and require mental prayer, at short intervals, in order to fix our attention, and exalt our affections, by giving scope to the secondarily automatic workings of a devout heart.

Secondly, Forms of prayer, composed by persons of a devout spirit, are of use to all at certain times, for assisting the invention, and exciting fervency; and in the beginning of a religious course they seem to be necessary, as they certainly are for children. But it would be a great hindrance to the growth and perfection of our devotion, always to keep to forms. The heart of every particular person alone knows its own bitterness, its desires, guilt, fears, hopes, and joys; and it will be impossible to open ourselves without reserve, and with a filial love and confidence in God, unless we do it of ourselves, in such words as the then present state of mind, when under a vigorous sense of the divine presence, shall suggest.

Thirdly, A regularity as to the times of private devotion helps to keep persons steady in a religious course, and to call them off again and again from pursuing and setting their hearts upon the vanities of the world. And we may affirm in particular, that the morning and evening sacrifice of private prayer and praise ought never to be dispensed with, in ordinary cases, not even by persons far advanced in the ways of piety. It seems also very consonant to the true spirit of devotion, to have set hours of  
prayer



prayer in the course of the day, as memorials and means of begetting this spirit, which, however, cannot be observed by the bulk of the world with exactness. Lastly, It will be of great use to accustom ourselves to certain ejaculations upon the various particular occasions, that occur in the daily course of each person's business and profession. It is true indeed, that all these rules are of the nature of *Judaical* rites and ceremonies; but then let it be considered, that even in christian countries every man must be a *Jew* in effect, before he can arrive at *christian* liberty, and be able, to worship God *in spirit, and in truth*, and indeed in order to arrive thither. Times, forms, and rules of devotion, are school-masters that serve to bring us to Christ. As for those persons who are so far advanced, as to walk with God continually, who sanctify the minutest actions by a perpetual dedication of them to God, I do not presume to instruct them. *Their anointing teaches them all things.*

Fourthly, The matter of our prayers must be different, according to the state that we are in; for in prayer we ought always to lay our real case, whatever it be, before God. Confession of sins, and petition for graces, are the most useful and requisite for young penitents, and must always have a considerable share in those who are farther advanced. But when the heart overflows with joy and gratitude to God, and tender love to others, which is more frequently the case with those, who have *kept their first love* for some time, it is easy to see, that praise and intercession must be most natural and suitable. Temporal wants ought not to be forgotten. We are to acknowledge God in every thing; consider him as our father, and only friend, upon all occasions; place no confidence in our own wisdom or strength, or in the course of nature; have moderate desires, and be ready to give up even these. Now prayer, with  
express

express acts of resignation, in respect of external things, has a tendency to beget in us such dispositions. However, I do not extend this to such persons as are resigned to God in all things, temporal and spiritual, for themselves as well as for others, who desiring nothing but that the will of God may be done, see also that it is done, acquiesce and rejoice in it.

Fifthly, Prayer must always be accompanied by faith, *i. e.* we must not only look up to God, as our sole refuge, but as an effectual one. He that believes the existence and attributes of God really and practically, will have this entire confidence, so as to be assured that the thing desired of God will be granted, either precisely as desired, or in some way more suitable to his circumstances; an act of resignation being here joined to one of faith. How far our Saviour's directions, concerning faith in prayer, are an encouragement and command to expect the precise thing desired, is very doubtful to me. However, we may certainly learn from his example, that resignation is a necessary requisite in prayer; that we ought always to say, *Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.*

Sixthly, Public prayer is a necessary duty, as well as private. By this we publicly profess our obedience to God through Christ; we excite and are excited by others to fervency in devotion, and to christian benevolence; and we have a claim to the promise of Christ to those who are assembled together in his name. The christian religion has been kept alive, as one may say, during the great corruption and apostasy, by the public worship of God in churches; and it is probable, that religious assemblies will be much more frequent than they now are, whenever it shall please God to put it into the hearts of christians to proceed to the general conversion of all nations. We ought therefore to prepare ourselves for, and  
hasten

hasten unto, this glorious time, as much as possible, by joining together in prayers for this purpose; and *so much the more, as we see the day approaching.*

Lastly, Family prayer, which is something between the public prayers of each church, and the private ones of each individual, must be necessary, since these are. The same reasons are easily applied. And I believe it may be laid down as a certain fact, that no master or mistress of a family can have a true concern for religion, or be a child of God, who does not take care to worship God by family prayer. Let the observation of the fact determine.

## S E C T. VIII.

OF THE REGARD DUE TO THE PLEASURES AND PAINS OF THE MORAL SENSE IN FORMING THE RULE OF LIFE.

## P R O P. LXXIV.

*The moral Sense ought to be made the immediate Guide of our Actions on all sudden Emergencies; and therefore its Pleasures may be considered as making Part of our primary Pursuit.*

IN deducing rules for social conduct above, I laid down the moral sense as one, which ought to have great influence in the most explicit and deliberate actions. Now this is, in some measure, sufficient to prove, that its pleasures make part of our primary pursuit. I here propose to shew, that the moral sense ought not only to have some, but the sole influence, on emergent occasions; and this will be a farther recommendation of its pleasures.

That the moral sense is such an immediate guide, will appear for the following reasons.

First, Because it offers itself in the various occurrences of life, at the same time producing its credentials. For it warns us beforehand, and calls us to account afterwards; it condemns or acquits; it rewards by the pleasures of self-approbation, or punishes by the pains of self-condemnation. It appears therefore with the authority of a judge, and also of one who knows the hearts; and, by consequence, it claims to be God's viceroy, and the forerunner



of the sentence which we may hereafter expect from him.

Secondly, The moral sense is generated chiefly by piety, benevolence, and rational self-interest; all which are explicit guides of life in deliberate actions. Since therefore these are excluded on sudden occasions, through the want of time to weigh and determine, it seems highly reasonable to admit the moral sense, which is their offspring, and whose dictates are immediate, for their substitute.

Thirdly, The greatness, the permanency, and the calm nature of the pleasures of the moral sense, with the horrors, and constant recurrency, of the sense of guilt, are additional arguments to shew, that these pleasures and pains were intended for the guides of life, and the pleasures for a primary pursuit.

Fourthly, The mechanical generation of the pleasures and pains of the moral sense may by some be thought an objection, to the reasoning here used; but it will appear otherwise, upon due consideration. For all the things which have evident final causes, are plainly brought about by mechanical means; so that we may argue either way, viz. either from seeing the mechanical means, to the existence of a final cause, not yet discovered; or from the existence of a final cause, to that of the mechanical means, not yet discovered. Thus a person who should take notice, that milk always appeared in the breasts of the dam at the proper season for the young animal, might conclude that this was effected mechanically; or, if he first saw, that milk must be brought mechanically into the breasts, soon after the birth of the young, he might conclude, that this milk would be of some use; and, from a very little farther recollection, might perceive that it was for the nourishment of the new-born animal. In like manner, if any one sees, that a power, like that of conscience, must be generated in the human mind, from the frame of it, compared  
with

with the impressions made upon it by external objects, he may be assured, that this power must have some use ; and a very little reflection upon the divine attributes, and the circumstances of mankind, will shew that its peculiar use must be that of a guide and governor.

If we could suppose the moral sense to be either an instinct impressed by God, or the necessary result of the eternal reasons and relations of things, independent of association, it ought still to be considered as a guide of life. For since the favourers of each of these suppositions maintain, that the moral sense is entirely coincident with the precepts of benevolence and piety ; it must, according to them, be made their substitute upon emergent occasions.

#### P R O P. LXXV.

*To deduce practical Rules for the Regulation and Improvement of the moral Sense.*

THERE are three things principally necessary in the conduct of the moral sense. First, That it extend to all the actions of moment, which occur in the intercourses of human life ; and be a ready monitor to us on such occasions. Secondly, That it should not descend to minute and trifling particulars ; for then it would check benevolence, and turn the love of God into a superstitious fear. And, Thirdly, That its informations be in all cases agreeable to piety and benevolence, whose substitute it is.

Now it will be easily seen, that, for the right conduct of our moral sense in all these particulars, it will be necessary for us to be much employed in the practical study of the scriptures, and of the writings of good men of all denominations, in observing the living examples of such, in calling ourselves to account frequently, in prayer, and other exercises of  

Z 2
devotion,

devotion, in endeavouring to convert all the sympathetic and theopathic affections into the love of God, in aiming at a truly catholic and charitable spirit, and in walking faithfully, according to the dictates of benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, such as they are at present. For *to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance.* Some of these directions are more particularly suited to correct one defect in the moral sense, some another; but they will all conspire in purifying and perfecting it.

## General COROLLARIES to the last SEVEN SECTIONS.

COR. I. WE may now, by reviewing the seven last sections, judge how much the christian morality is superior to the pagan, in sublimity and purity. The pagan morality was comprehended under the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance; and these were so explained and understood by the pagans, as to omit many necessary christian virtues, and allow, or even recommend some great enormities. I will class a few particulars of this kind under the respective heads of sensation, imagination, ambition, self-interest, sympathy, theopathy, and the moral sense.

The pagan virtue of temperance prohibited all gross excesses in eating and drinking, and many acts of lewdness. But it fell far short of the christian precepts, in regard to the external actions; and seems no ways to have extended to the regulation of the thoughts.

The pagan fortitude enjoined great patience and perseverance in difficulties, pains, and dangers. But it was, in part, founded in pride; and so was opposite to the christian fortitude, whose strength lies in its weakness, in a diffidence in ourselves, and confidence in God. And how much the christian was superior in degree, as well as kind, may appear from the examples of the martyrs and confessors in the primitive times, who were of all ranks, professions, ages, and sexes, and of innumerable private persons in the present, as well as all past ages of the church, who are able to *rejoice in tribulation*, and to do all things, through Christ that strengtheneth them. They do not make a shew of themselves to the world; that would be ostentation, and vain-glory:



but those who desire to be animated by, and to imitate, such living examples, may find them in every christian country in the world.

As to the pleasures of imagination, there seems to have been no restraint laid upon them by the pagan morality. Curiosity, and the study of the arts and sciences for their own sakes, were even recommended.

Ambition was, in like manner, esteemed virtuous; and many kinds and degrees of humility were treated with reproach and contempt.

Gross self-interest was allowed in a much greater degree by the pagans, than it is amongst christians. The pagans scarce knew what refined self-interest was; and they did not at all apprehend, that any objection lay against rational self-interest, or that a purer motive to action was necessary.

Their benevolence was chiefly a love of relations, benefactors, and their country. They fell far short of universal unlimited benevolence, equal to self-love; and they allowed, and even recommended, taking vengeance on enemies, as an heroic, noble action.

As to the theopathic affections of faith, fear, gratitude, hope, trust, resignation, and love, with the expressions of these in prayer and praise, they knew nothing of them in general. Polytheism, and impure notions of their deities, had quite depraved and starved all their theopathic affections. They were destitute of love, and their fear was superstition.

Lastly, The consequence of all this must be, and accordingly was, a proportional imperfection in the moral sense. It was deficient in most things, erroneous in many, and needlessly scrupulous in some. It occupied the place of the Deity; for the best amongst the pagans idolized the innate sense of *honesty*, and the independent power of the mind, the *sensus honesti*, and the τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῶν.

I do not deny but that some heathen moralists may now and then have expressed themselves in a manner superior to what I have here described. But I speak of the general tenor of their writings, and desire that may be compared with the general tenor of the scriptures, of the fathers, and of the christian divines of all ages.

COR. 2. By a like review of the seven last sections, we may discern more clearly and fully the relative nature of the virtues and vices, which has been already taken notice of; and thus both learn to be more candid and charitable in our judgments on the actions of others, and more earnest and unwearied after perfection in ourselves.

COR. 3. Since it now appears fully, that the pleasures and pains of the four first classes are to be subjected to those of the three last, *i. e.* the pleasures of those foregone, and the pains accepted; whereas the pleasures of these are to be chosen, and the pains avoided; I will here give, in one view, some principal motives to engage us thus to regulate our affections and actions.

First, then, The great composure and peace of mind, which those persons enjoy, who make benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, the rule of their lives, is a strong inducement to us to imitate their example. As we desire to learn all other arts from those who practise them in the greatest perfection, so ought we the art of living. The persons in whom this peace is most observable, were the authors of the books of the Old and New Testaments; and these books may be distinguished from all other books by this remarkable circumstance, that the authors appear to have been quite free from this dissatisfaction, doubt, care, and fear, which are so obvious in the discourses and writings of other persons. However, the same thing appears, in a less degree, in the discourses of all good men, even heathens; as

Z 4

in

in the discourses of *Socrates* preserved by *Plato* and *Xenophon*; and may be observed in the conduct and behaviour of all such, by those who are conversant with them. Eminently pious and benevolent persons seem to be in possession of some great secret, some *catholicon*, or philosopher's stone. They pass through life, unhurt, as to the peace of their minds, by the evils of it; and find abundant matter for praise and thanksgiving to God in it. All which appears to be owing to their being guided by the true principle of action.

Secondly, Death is certain, and necessarily attended with many terrifying associations; and a future state must, even upon the slightest presumption of its reality, be a matter of the greatest concern to all thinking persons. Now the frequent recurrency of these fears and anxieties must imbitter all guilty pleasures, and even the more innocent trifling amusements; which, though not glaringly opposite to duty, are yet besides it, and foreign to it. And thus men live in bondage all their lives through the fear of death; more so than they are aware of themselves (for men often neglect the fair examination of themselves, so much as not to know their real state, though obvious enough upon a due inquiry); and still much more so, than they own and express to others. But nothing can deliver men from this great evil, besides entire rectitude of heart. While there is a consciousness of any wilful failure, of any unfairness, of prevarication with God, or a desire and design to deceive one's self, the terrors of religion rage with greater fury than in a state of utter negligence, and disregard to duty. A man cannot rest, while he is double-minded, while he strives and hopes to serve God and *mammon* together; but must either go forward in order to obtain true lasting peace, or backward to infatuate and stupefy himself. And this  
helps

helps us to account for the foregoing observation on the behaviour of truly good men.

Thirdly, It appears from the very frame of our natures, that we are not qualified for any great degrees of happiness here, nor for an uninterrupted continuance of any degree, nor for the frequent returns of any particular pleasure, bodily or mental. From all which it will follow, that a general hope, mixed with the cares, fears, and sorrows of compassion and contrition, is the only pleasure, that is attainable, lasting, or suitable to our present circumstances.

Fourthly, Besides the fears relating to death, and a future state, all persons who serve the world, must have very great ones in respect of the things of the world. A man must be *crucified to the world*, before his heart can be at ease concerning its pleasures, honours, and profits. And as our pains are, in general, more exquisite than our pleasures; so is fear, worldly fear, the offspring of the first, greater in degree, than worldly hope, the offspring of the last; and, if it recurs often, will overbalance it; and must make a great deduction, upon all suppositions. Now devotion to God, though it does lessen the hopes of this world, as well as the fears; yet it seems to lessen the fears in a much quicker ratio; however, it certainly takes off their edge, and leaves so much hope and pleasure, as to be a foundation for the duty of thankfulness to God.

Fifthly, An upright heart is necessary to our having a real influencing sense and conviction of the divine amiableness and benevolence, and, consequently, to our peace and comfort. When any dread, or slavish fear, attends the conception of the divine nature, a man can never think himself safe; but will always have anxieties and misgivings. And our ideas of God must always be thus tainted with superstition, whatever our theory be, if our hearts be

not.



not right before him. We shall weakly and wickedly suppose and fear, that he *is such a one as we ourselves are*, whatever declarations we make, whatever demonstrations we possess, to the contrary. And as this cannot but cast a gloom upon the whole course of nature to the wicked, so the contrary persuasion is the principal source of joy and comfort to the good. They do in earnest believe God to be their friend and father; they love him with a sincere, though imperfect love; and are easily led, from the consciousness and inward feeling of this, to consider him as pure and infinite love. And all these four last observations, put together, but especially that of this paragraph, account for the facts mentioned in the first.

S E C T. IX.

OF THE RULE OF FAITH.

P R O P. LXXVI.

*To inquire what Faith in natural and revealed Religion, or in the particular Tenets of Christian Churches, is necessary for the Purification and Perfection of our Natures.*

HAVING now shewn, that benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, are to be the guides of life, and the compass by which we are to steer our course through the difficulties and dangers of this mixed, imperfect state, it remains that we inquire, whether there be any rule of faith, resulting or distinct from the foregoing rule of life, that is necessary to our present duty, or future salvation.

First, then, Since piety is part of the foregoing rule of life, it is evident, that no one can comply with this rule, unless he be a sincere deist at least, *i. e.* unless he believe the existence and attributes of God, his providence, a future state, and the rewards and punishments of it.

Secondly, The evidence for the christian religion seems to be so clear and strong in all christian countries, and that with respect to all ranks and conditions of men, that no person, who is previously qualified by benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, in the manner described in the seven last sections, can refuse his assent to it. This I take to be a plain matter of observation, supported by the universal testimony of those persons, that attend to it; meaning by the christian religion, the belief of the divine mission of *Moses* and the prophets, of Christ and his apostles,  
or

or the truth of the scriptures. Whoever therefore conducts himself by the foregoing rule, must believe revealed religion, as well as natural, if born in a christian country. All unbelievers, where there is so much evidence, I had almost said all doubters, seem to be culpable in a very high degree.

Thirdly, As faith in Christ is the result of a right disposition of mind in christian countries; so is this right disposition, in its turn, the result of believing in Christ; and they increase one another reciprocally without limits. And though some persons in the heathen world were conducted to great degrees of benevolence, and uprightness of mind, and even to some degrees of piety; yet were these persons exceedingly rare, and the degrees far inferior to what is ordinarily to be found in christian countries. This therefore is a strong proof of the necessity of faith in revealed religion. All things else being alike, the person who believes in Christ will become superior to him who does not, in proportion to the vigour of his faith. Which is also a plain and cogent reason, why those, that are already christians, should labour to the utmost of their abilities in converting the barbarous nations, even though their present ignorance of revealed religion be excusable in them. But there is far more reason to alarm and awaken, if possible, those who disbelieve in the midst of light and evidence, *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*; since they not only want these motives and assistances to perfection, but are guilty of great prevarication and unfairness with themselves, and shut their eyes against *the light, because their deeds are evil*. If any unbeliever thinks this censure too severe, let him examine his own heart. Is he previously qualified by love to God, and to all the world, by a sincere regard for, and observance of, natural religion? Is he chaste, temperate, meek, humble,

humble, just, and charitable? Does he delight in God, in contemplating his providence, praying to him, and praising him? Does he believe a future state, and expect it with hope and comfort? Is he not so fond of the praise of men, or so fearful of censure and ridicule, as to be ashamed to own Christ? If the christian religion be true, it must be of great importance; and, if of great importance, it is a duty of natural religion to inquire into it. The obligation therefore to examine seriously subsists in some degree, as long as there is any evidence for, any doubt of, the truth of revelation. For, if true, it must be of importance, whether we see that importance or not. He who determines, that it is of no importance, determines at once, that it is false. But it is too evident to all impartial observers, that those who disbelieve, or affect to disbelieve, have not made a serious accurate inquiry; such a one as they would make about a worldly concern of moment; but content themselves, and endeavour to perplex others, with general objections, mixed, for the most part, with ridicule and raillery, things that are manifest hinderances in the search after truth. However, this may be perhaps, too severe a censure, in respect of some; nay, we ought not to condemn any, but to consider, that *to their own master they stand or fall.*

Fourthly, A nominal, or even a real, but merely historical and speculative faith, is quite insufficient, and falls infinitely short of that which the foregoing rule of duty requires. And yet it is of some probable use to be reckoned among the number of believers, though a man be, for the present, inattentive; because such a one lies more in the way of conviction and influence; and is free from that great objection and difficulty to human nature, a reluctance to change even a nominal opinion. As to the person, who has a real, historical, speculative faith,



*i. e.* who sees that the Old and New Testaments have the same and in many respects greater evidences for their truth and genuineness, than other books universally allowed, who is ready to acknowledge this, and to give reasons for it of the same kind with those that are admitted in similar cases, he possesses one of the principal requisites for generating the true, practical, internal faith, *that overcomes the world*; and if he be not withheld by pride and self-conceit, so as to rest in this historical faith, as sufficient of itself, will make much quicker advances, *cæteris paribus*, towards the true living faith, than a person destitute of the historical one. For the true living faith is that vivid sense and perception of God, our Saviour, a future state, and the other related ideas, that make them appear at once as realities, and become powerful and instantaneous motives to action. But it is very evident, that an historical faith must, by impressing and uniting these ideas during the time that they are considered, and reflected upon, produce the effects, the reality, above-described, in the same manner as the interested love of God does at last generate the pure disinterested love. And the calamities and sorrows of human life will be much more likely to strike him who is possessed of an historical faith, than a person ignorant of the subject.

It must, however, be acknowledged, that the real practical faith is by no means in exact proportion to the historical. Persons of good dispositions, of humble minds, who *pray without ceasing*, who have been much afflicted, &c. have impressions of the religious kind excited in them with more vigour and facility than others. Yet still no man can have the practical faith without some degree of the historical; and those who have little of the historical are liable to be shaken, to *be turned about by every wind of doctrine*, and to be carried into extravagancies

cies by the zeal without knowledge. *What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.* It is the duty of every man, whether he have the practical faith or not, to inquire, to read the scriptures, and to meditate thereon; the necessary consequence of which is an increase of the historical faith. It is also the duty of every christian to give a reason for his faith, to preach the gospel (for true christians are a nation of priests in this sense); which cannot be done without some knowledge of the historical evidences. Admitting therefore, that mere internal faith (if such a thing be possible) did suffice to all other purposes, it will, however, be defective in this one most necessary duty of the christian life. Though a mere good example will do much good, yet the same good example, accompanied with knowledge, and a rational faith will do more.

Fifthly, It seems entirely useless to all good purposes, to the promotion of piety and benevolence, in the present state of things, to form any creeds, articles, or systems of faith, and to require an assent to these in words or writing. Men are to be influenced, even in respect of the principal doctrines of God's providence, a future state, and the truth of the scriptures, by rational methods only, not by compulsion. This seems acknowledged on all hands. Why then should harsher methods be used in things of confessedly less importance? It is true, that magistrates have a power from God to inflict punishment upon such as disobey, and to confine the natural liberty of acting within certain bounds, for the common good of their subjects. But all this is of a nature very foreign to the pretences for confining opinions by discouragements and punishments.

Those who believe neither natural nor revealed religion practically, will be held by no restraints; they will appear to consent to any thing, just as their  
interest

interest leads them. And this is the case of a great part of the subscribers in all christian communities. They have a mere nominal faith<sup>1</sup> only, at the time of subscribing, not even a speculative or historical one: or if they have any degree of seriousness, and good impressions, they must do proportional violence to these by performing a religious act out of a mere interested view.

If the person be an earnest believer of natural religion, but an unbeliever in respect of revealed (to suppose this possible for argument's sake), he will not attempt any office in the christian ministry. However, he ought not to be deprived of *civil* privileges, whilst so many wicked nominal christians are suffered to enjoy them.

Suppose the person required to subscribe to be a speculative historical believer, why should his future inquiries be confined? How can he inquire honestly, if they be? How can a person be properly qualified to study the word of God, and to search out its meaning, who finds himself previously confined to interpret it in a particular manner? If the subject matter of the article be of great importance to be understood and believed, one may presume, that it is plain, and needs no article; if of small importance, why should it be made a test, or insisted upon? If it be a difficult, abstruse point, no one upon earth has authority to make an article concerning it. We are all brethren; there is no father, no master, amongst us; we are helpers of, not lords over, each other's faith. If we judge from other branches of learning, as natural philosophy, or physics, we shall there find, that the pure evidence of the things themselves is sufficient to overcome all opposition, after a due time. The doctrines of gravitation, of the different refrangibility of the rays of light, of the circulation of the blood, &c. can never be believed to any useful practical purpose, till they

they be examined and understood; and those, who now believe them, affirm, that this is all that is necessary for their universal reception. If they should be mistaken in this, free examination would be so much the more requisite.

The apostles' creed is so plain and clear, except in the three articles concerning the descent of Christ into hell, the holy catholic church, and the communion of saints, that no one who believes the truth of the scriptures, can hesitate about it; not even how to interpret the three forementioned articles, in a sense agreeable to the scriptures. It is quite useless therefore to require an assent even to these articles. As to the metaphysical subtleties, which appear in the subsequent creeds, they can at best be only human interpretations of scripture words; and therefore can have no authority. Words refer to words, and to grammatical and logical analogies, in an endless manner, in these things; and all the real foundation which we have is in the words of scripture, and of the most ancient writers, considered as helps, not authorities. It is sufficient therefore, that a man take the scriptures for his guide, and apply himself to them with an honest heart, and humble and earnest prayer; which things have no connection with forms and subscriptions.

Nay, it seems needless, or ensnaring to subscribe even to the scriptures themselves. If to any particular canon, copy, &c. ensnaring, because of the many real doubts in these things. If not, it is quite superfluous from the latitude allowed. Yet still it appears to me incontestable, that no careful impartial inquirer can doubt of the great truths of the scriptures, such as the miraculous birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, &c. or of the practical consequences thence arising; and surely it cannot be necessarily requisite, that a man should believe more than these.



For, Lastly, Let us suppose the person required to assent, or subscribe, to be a real earnest believer. It can scarce be supposed, that such a person should assent to any set of articles, so as honestly to affirm, that he would choose to express his own sense of the scripture language in these words. To strain either the scriptures, or the articles, must be a very ungrateful task to an ingenuous man; and perhaps there may be so wide a difference in some instances in his opinion, that no straining can bring them together. And thus some of the most earnest believers are excluded from the christian ministry, and from certain common privileges of society, by a method, which suffers nominal wicked christians to pass without difficulty:

If it be objected, that, unless preachers subscribe, they may teach different doctrines; I answer, that they do this, though they do subscribe; and that in the most important practical points. If the scriptures cannot yet produce a true unity of opinion on account of our present ignorance, and the weakness and wickedness of our natures, how should articles do this? Men can put as different senses upon articles, as upon texts, and so dispute without end. Which evidently appears to have been the case in the primitive church. Every decision, as soon as settled, became the source of a new division between persons, who yet still agreed to the foregoing decision in words; till at last the whole efficacy and spirit of christianity, was lost in mere verbal disputes. But the best answer is, that preachers ought entirely to confine themselves to practical subjects, the descriptions of the virtues and vices, with the motives for and against each, the directions to attain the virtues, and avoid the vices; and this in all the various real circumstances of human life. Learned inquiries have their use undoubtedly; but they are much better communicated

cated to the learned world by the press, than to a mixed assembly by the pulpit. It is a kind of sacrilege to rob God's flock of the nourishment due to them from public preachings, and; in its stead, to run out upon questions, that minister no profit to the hearers, at least to far the greatest part.

As to the press, since all other men have the liberty of conveying their thoughts to the public that way, it is surely unfitting, that the ministers of the gospel should be deprived of it. And, indeed, to lay any restraints, looks like distrusting the cause. There is undoubtedly a very bad use made of the press, and *woe to those by whom offences come* to the little ones that believe in Christ! But it is to be hoped and presumed, that the power of the wicked to do harm is not equal to the power of the good to do good, in this or any other such neutral method of communicating infection good and bad to the public. This would be to prefer barbarity and ignorance to the instruction and civilization of mankind. Learning, arts, and improvements of all kinds, are subservient both to good and bad purposes; and yet still the balance is probably on the side of good upon the whole, since God is all powerful, all wise, and all good. These attributes must ever turn the scale to their own side, finitely in every finite portion of time, infinitely in infinite time. We need not fear therefore, but that true knowledge will at last be increased and prevail, that the wise and good will understand, the wicked be silenced and converted, and the church of Christ fill the whole earth. It is a great insult offered to the truths of religion, to suppose that they want the same kind of assistance as impostures, human projects, or worldly designs. Let every man be allowed to think, speak, and write, freely; and then the errors will combat one another, and leave truth unhurt.

Sixthly, Though creeds, articles, &c. seem to have no use now, but even to be prejudicial to the cause of truth in themselves; yet it may be necessary to submit to some forms of this kind in certain cases; at least, it no ways becomes a christian to declaim against them in violent terms, or oppose them with bitterness, but merely, in a plain dispassionate way, to represent the truth of the case, so as by degrees to draw men's zeal from these lesser matters, and transfer it upon greater, *Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth.* There may be good relative reasons in both cases. And it may be, and probably is the truth, that in the early ages of the church, whilst christians were Judaizers, entangled in externals, gross in their conceptions, &c. these forms were necessary, *cæteris manentibus.* But now they grow old, and seem ready to die away, and to give place to the worship of God *in spirit, and in truth*; in which there is no *Papist, Protestant, Lutheran, Calvinist, Trinitarian, Unitarian, Mystic, Methodist, &c.* but all these distinctions are carried away like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors. We are all christians, we received this denomination in apostolic times, and ought to seek no other. Only let us take care to depart from iniquity, to have the true seal of God in our foreheads, not the mark of the beast. The real conversion of the heart from the idolatrous worship of pleasure, honour, and profit, of sensation, imagination, ambition, and self-interest, to serve the living God, is the only thing of importance; *circumcision and uncircumcision are equally nothing. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.* Only, where a plain act of insincerity is required, this approaches to the case of eating in the idol's temple, and gives great offence to others.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, If we examine the doctrines which are chiefly contested among christians by the opposite parties, it will appear, that the disputes are, in great measure, verbal, and proceed from men's not knowing the true nature and use of words. Thus, if we consider the doctrine of infallibility, the nature of words shews at once, that this could be of no use, since the decisions of the infallible judge must be expressed in words, and consequently be liable to be misunderstood by some or other of the readers, for the same reasons as the scriptures are.—To say that Christ's body and blood are in the bread and wine so as that the sensible qualities of one become the sensible qualities of the other, would be to appeal to the senses for assent, where they instantly reject the proposition. To say that Christ's mystical or glorified body is present in some way or other, is what no one can deny, because nothing is really affirmed. The words seem to coalesce into a verbal truth; but when we attempt to realize the proposition, it vanishes. The scripture expressions concerning the mystical body of Christ, and his union with the church, contain within them some most important and wonderful truths undoubtedly, but they are yet sealed up from us.—In the disputes concerning the trinity and incarnation of Christ, if the words *person*, *substance*, *nature*, &c. be used as in other cases, or any way defined, the most express contradictions follow: yet the language of the scriptures is most difficult, sublime, and mysterious, in respect of the person of Christ; so that one cannot fall short of paying all that honour to Christ, which the most orthodox believe to be required.—As to the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ, it appears that he has done all for us that one being can do for another; and that it would be a most unjustifiable and narrow way of expressing ourselves, to confine the benefits received from Christ to that



of mere example. But the first and most literal sense of the words *sacrifice, redemption, &c.* when realized, is evidently impossible; and we do not seem to be able to give any better general sense to these words, than by saying, that they signify, that the sufferings of one being are, by the order of God, made the means of happiness to another. To adopt the ideas of *debt, wrath of God, &c.* in a strict sense, is anthropomorphism. — The introduction of new, unscriptural, technical terms seems scarce justifiable, unless as far as one christian brother may thereby endeavour to make the harmony and analogy of the scripture language to itself, and to the course of nature, more evident to another. But this is all *private interpretation*. And it often happens in these cases, that an hypothesis is taken up hastily, in order to reconcile the scripture to itself, like those philosophical ones, which are not drawn from a number of concurring facts, but merely accommodated to a few particular appearances.

C H A P. IV.

*Of the EXPECTATIONS of MANKIND, here and here-  
after, in CONSEQUENCE of their OBSERVANCE or  
VIOLATION of the RULE of LIFE.*

S E C T. I.

OF THE EXPECTATIONS OF INDIVIDUALS  
IN THE PRESENT LIFE.

P R O P. LXXVII.

*It is probable, that most or all Men receive more  
Happiness than Misery in their Passage through the  
present Life.*

SOME evidences for this proposition have been given above, where it was alleged as one of the proofs of the goodness of God. Here we may consider it, both as deducible from those evidences, and from the goodness of God, previously established upon independent principles.

For if we suppose God to be both infinitely benevolent, and the sole cause of all things; if, farther, the relative appellations of governor, friend, and father, may with propriety be made the foundation of our inquiries into his dispensations in general (all

which I have endeavoured to prove above); we can scarce suppose, but that the remarkable period of our existence, which commences at our birth, and ends with the death of the body, which we then brought into the world with us, will, upon the whole, afford us more pleasure than pain. This is, at least, our first and most natural presumption, in the view of things here considered. However, it must always be remembered, that we are not proper judges of such high speculations; and that an over-balance of misery in this life, or any other, is perfectly consistent with the infinite goodness of God, even according to our ways of reasoning, upon supposition that all his creatures become happy upon the whole at last, finitely or infinitely.

I choose therefore to rest this proposition chiefly upon certain intimations, and indirect evidences thereof, which are scattered up and down in the scriptures. Such are the blessing of God conferred upon *all* his creatures at their creation, his covenant with them *all* at the flood, the precepts to *all* to praise him, the mention of his being *loving to every man, of remembering mercy in judgment, not being extreme to mark what is done amiss, &c.* These are no direct proofs of the proposition here advanced; but they leave such impressions of love and mercy upon the mind, and seem intended to put us into such a way of thinking and reasoning, as lead to it. They afford therefore some presumption in its favour, since nothing contrary thereto is to be found any where either in the word or works of God.

The murmurings, and bitter outcries, of men in a state of suffering, are no more an evidence against this proposition, than the extravagant mirth, and chimerical hopes, of unexperienced persons, during health and prosperity, are for it. Neither of these take in the whole of the case.

## P R O P. LXXVIII.

*The Balance cannot be much in Favour even of the most happy, during the present Life.*

FOR, First, This is agreeable to the general experience of mankind. It is obvious, that life is chequered with good and evil in such degrees and varieties, as that the first cannot prevail much. Agreeably to this, the experienced and dispassionate, in reviewing their past life, will at least affirm, that the happiness has not greatly exceeded the misery. And indeed the difficulty of proving the foregoing proposition is a very sufficient evidence for this.

Secondly, The disorderly state of the external world, and the imperfection of our bodies, with their tendency to corruption, do not permit, that happiness should much exceed misery in the present life; and may be considered as the efficient instrumental cause of this. Bodily pain must in many cases be impressed upon us by external objects; both this, and bodily pleasure, lay the foundation for intellectual pains, and for irregular passions, which lead back again to pain, bodily and mental; our bodies must return to dust, and every manifest approach thereto must be attended with suffering: and the unknown internal structure of the brain, the great instrument of sense and thought, is such, as subjects us, from innumerable secret unavoidable causes, to pass into the limits of pain. All which is only saying in other words, that we are fallen creatures.

Thirdly, In our present circumstances, all other things remaining as they are, it is requisite for us not to have any great over-balance of happiness in this life; and this may be considered as the final cause.

For



For we may hope, by this perpetual mixture of misery with our happiness, to be the sooner and the more perfectly freed from that self-love, gross or refined, which every kind and degree of happiness, even the most spiritual, contributes to generate in us; and to make the greater progress in learning the virtues of benevolence, compassion, humility, fear of God, submission to his will, earnest application to him, faith, hope, love towards him.

Fourthly, The whole tenor of the scriptures shews both in a direct and indirect way, that we ought not, cannot expect any great or lasting happiness in this life.

We ought therefore, whenever false flattering hopes, with relation to our future condition in this life, rise up to view in our imaginations, and tempt us, instantly to reject them; and, in the language of the scriptures, *to rejoice as though we rejoiced not; to remember that we are strangers and pilgrims here, that we only dwell in tabernacles, have no continuing city, but expect one to come, the New Jerusalem, of which we are denizens, where our treasure and hearts ought to be.* The best and most religious persons ought to expect, and even to desire this *daily bread* of sorrow and affliction, this *blessedness of those that mourn*, and to watch and pray against the temptations of prosperity, lest the day of death should come upon them unawares, *as a thief in the night, while they are eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage.*

COR. We might shew, by a like method of reasoning, that if the misery of this life should, in certain cases, outweigh the happiness, it cannot, however, do this in any great degree. There must, from the nature of our frame and circumstances here, be many intervals of ease, cheerfulness, and even positive pleasure. Dejection and despondency are therefore as unsuitable to our present situation,

as

as a vain confidence, and foolish hope, of uninterrupted happiness. We may learn also hence not to be terrified at any self-denials or sufferings for the sake of religion, exclusively of those arguments, which shew in a direct way, that religion promotes our present happiness, as well as our future. Our very natures prevent the long continuance of exquisite misery. Misery by continuance declines, and even passes into happiness; and there must be, in every state of long continuance, the frequent intervention of grateful sensations and ideas.

P R O P. LXXIX.

*Virtue has always the fairest Prospect, even in this Life;  
and Vice is always exposed to the greatest Hazards.*

THIS has been the business of the last chapter to shew. But it is a truth, which is sufficiently evident from common observation. Particular acts of virtue and vice often fail of their due reward and punishment, if we take in no more than a small period of time after the act is performed. But then, if we take in the indefinite extent of this life, and estimate the natural expectations, it can scarce be doubted, but that every act of virtue is our greatest wisdom, even in respect of this world, every act of vice our greatest folly. Now this general tendency of virtue and vice respectively may be considered as the principal evidence, which the light of nature, not subtilized or refined by deep speculations, affords for the moral character of the Deity. The rewards which the course of nature bestows upon virtue in general, and the fairness of the prospect which it affords to the virtuous, shew that the virtuous are acceptable to the Deity; and we may conclude for like reasons, that vice is odious in his sight.

P R O P.

## P R O P. LXXX.

*It does not seem at all probable, that Happiness is exactly proportioned to Virtue in the present Life.*

FOR, First, Those who suffer martyrdom for the sake of religion cannot be said to receive any reward in this life for this their last and greatest act of fidelity.

Secondly, Many good men are exercised with severe trials, purified thereby, and removed into another state in the course of this purification, or soon after it. Diseases which end in death, are a principal means of such purifications.

Thirdly, There are frequent instances of persons free indeed from gross vices, but void of great virtues, who from a favourable conjuncture of circumstances in this world, such as we may suppose attended the rich man in the parable, *fare sumptuously every day*, and live in a state of comparative ease and pleasure.

Fourthly, The same thing seems to hold in certain rare instances, even of very vicious persons; and one might almost conjecture, that Providence exposes some instances of this kind to view in a notorious manner, that the apparent inequality of its dispensations here, in a few cases, and the argument for a future state thence deducible, may make the greater impression upon us.

The reader may observe, that this proposition is not contrary to the foregoing; and that the foregoing must be established previously, before we can draw an argument for a future state from this, and the moral character of the Deity, put together.

It

It is to be observed also of the reasoning made use of under all the four propositions of this section, that it is rather probable, and conclusive, in a general way only, than demonstrative and precise. However, the probability and precision are as great as is necessary in practical matters. The practical inferences would remain the same, though these were less.



## S E C T. II.

OF THE EXPECTATION OF BODIES POLITIC, THE  
 JEWS IN PARTICULAR, AND THE WORLD IN  
 GENERAL, DURING THE PRESENT STATE OF  
 THE EARTH.

## P R O P. LXXXI.

*It is probable, that all the present civil Governments will  
 be overturned.*

THIS may appear from the scripture prophecies, both in a direct way, *i. e.* from express passages; such as those concerning the destruction of the image, and four beasts, in *Daniel*; of Christ's *breaking all nations with a rod of iron, and dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel*, &c. and from the supremacy and universal extent of the fifth monarchy, or kingdom of the saints, which is to be set up.

We may conclude the same thing also from the final restoration of the *Jews*, and the great glory and dominion promised to them, of which I shall speak below.

And it adds some light and evidence to this, that all the known governments of the world have the evident principles of corruption in themselves. They are composed of jarring elements, and subsist only by the alternate prevalence of these over each other. The splendour, luxury, self-interest, martial glory, &c. which pass for essentials in christian governments, are totally opposite to the meek, humble, self-denying spirit of christianity; and whichever of these finally prevails over the other, the present  
 form

form of the government must be dissolved. Did true christianity prevail throughout any kingdom entirely, the riches, strength, glory, &c. of that kingdom would no longer be an object of attention to the governors or governed; they would become a nation of priests and apostles, and totally disregard the things of this world. But this is not to be expected: I only mention it to set before the reader the natural consequence of it. If, on the contrary, worldly wisdom and infidelity prevail over christianity, which seems to be the prediction of the scriptures, this worldly wisdom will be found utter foolishness at last, even in respect of this world; the governments, which have thus lost their cement, the sense of duty, and the hopes and fears of a future life, will fall into anarchy and confusion, and be entirely dissolved. And all this may be applied, with a little change, to the *Mahometan* and *Heathen* governments. When christianity comes to be propagated in the countries where these subsist, it will make so great a change in the face of affairs, as must shake the civil powers, which are here both externally and internally opposite to it; and the increase of wickedness, which is the natural and necessary consequence of their opposition, will farther accelerate their ruin.

The dissolution of ancient empires and republics may also prepare us for the expectation of a dissolution of the present governments. But we must not carry the parallel too far here, and suppose that as new governments have arisen out of the old ones, resembling them in great measure, subsisting for a certain time, and then giving place to other new ones, so it will be with the present governments. The prophecies do not admit of this; and it may be easily seen, that the situation of things in the great world is very different from what it has ever been before. Christianity must now either be proved true, to the entire conviction of unbelievers; or, if it be an imposture,

posture, it will soon be detected. And whichsoever of these turns up, must make the greatest change in the face of affairs. I ought rather to have said, that the final prevalence and establishment of christianity, which, being true, cannot but finally prevail, and be established, will do this. But it may perhaps be of some use just to put false suppositions.

How near the dissolution of the present governments, generally or particularly, may be, would be great rashness to affirm. Christ will come in this sense also *as a thief in the night*. Our duty is therefore to watch, and to pray; to be faithful stewards; to give meat, and all other requisites, in due season, to those under our care; and to endeavour by these, and all other lawful means, to preserve the government, under whose protection we live, from dissolution, seeking the peace of it, and submitting to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. No prayers, no endeavours of this kind, can fail of having some good effect, public or private, for the preservation of ourselves or others. The great dispensations of Providence are conducted by means that are either secret, or, if they appear, that are judged feeble or inefficacious. No man can tell, however private his station may be, but his fervent prayer may avail to the salvation of much people. But it is more peculiarly the duty of magistrates thus to watch over their subjects, to pray for them, and to set about the reformation of all matters civil and ecclesiastical, to the utmost of their power. Good governors may promote the welfare and continuance of a state, and wicked ones must accelerate its ruin. The sacred history affords us instances of both kinds, and they are recorded there for the admonition of kings and princes in all future times.

It may not be amiss here to note a few instances of the analogy between the body natural, with the happiness of the individual to which it belongs, and  
the

the body politic, composed of many individuals, with its happiness, or its flourishing state in respect of arts, power, riches, &c. Thus all bodies politic seem, like the body natural, to tend to destruction and dissolution, as is here affirmed, through vices public and private, and to be respited for certain intervals, by partial, imperfect reformatations. There is no complete or continued series of public happiness on one hand, no utter misery on the other; for the dissolution of the body politic is to be considered as its death. It seems as romantic therefore for any one to project the scheme of a perfect government in this imperfect state, as to be in pursuit of an universal remedy, a remedy which should cure all distempers, and prolong human life beyond limit. And yet as temperance, labour, and medicines, in some cases, are of great use in preserving and restoring health, and prolonging life; so industry, justice, and all other virtues, public and private, have an analogous effect in respect of the body politic. As all the evils, which individuals suffer through the infirmity of the mortal body, and the disorders of the external world, may, in general, contribute to increase their happiness even in this life, and also are of great use to others; and as, upon the supposition of a future state, death itself appears to have the same beneficial tendency in a more eminent degree than any other event in life, now considered as indefinitely prolonged; so the distresses of each body politic are of great use to this body itself, and also of great use to all neighbouring states; and the dissolutions of governments have much promoted the knowledge of true religion, and of useful arts and sciences, all which seem, in due time and manner, intended to be entirely subservient to true religion at last. And this affords great comfort to benevolent and religious persons, when they consider the histories of former



times, or contemplate the probable consequences of things in future generations.

### P R O P. LXXXII.

*It is probable, that the present Forms of Church Government will be dissolved.*

THIS proposition follows from the foregoing. The civil and ecclesiastical powers are so interwoven and cemented together, in all the countries of *christendom*, that if the first fall, the last must fall also.

But there are many prophecies, which declare the fall of the ecclesiastical powers of the christian world. And though each church seems to flatter itself with the hopes of being exempted; yet it is very plain, that the prophetic characters belong to all. They have all left the true, pure, simple religion; and teach for doctrines the commandments of men. They are all merchants of the earth, and have set up a kingdom of this world, abounding in riches, temporal power, and external pomp. They have all a dogmatizing spirit, and persecute such as do not receive their own mark, and worship the image which they have set up. They all neglect Christ's command of preaching the gospel to all nations, and even that of going to *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, there being innumerable multitudes in all christian countries, who have never been taught to read, and who are, in other respects also, destitute of the means of saving knowledge. It is very true, that the church of Rome is *Babylon the great, and the mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth*. But all the rest have copied her example, more or less. They have all received money, like *Gebazi*; and therefore the leprosy of *Naaman* will cleave to them, and to their seed for ever. And this impurity may be considered not only as justifying the application of the prophecies to all the christian

christian churches, but as a natural cause for their downfall. The corrupt governors of the several churches will ever oppose the true gospel, and in so doing will bring ruin upon themselves.

The destruction of the temple at *Jerusalem*, and of the hierarchy of the *Jews*, may likewise be considered as a type and presage of the destruction of that *Judaical* form of rites, ceremonies, and human ordinances, which takes place, more or less, in all christian countries.

We ought, however, to remark here,

First, That though the church of Christ has been corrupted thus in all ages and nations, yet there have been, and will be, in all, many who receive the seal of God, and worship him *in spirit, and in truth*. And of these as many have filled high stations, as low ones. Such persons, though they have concurred in the support of what is contrary to the pure religion, have, however, done it innocently, with respect to themselves, being led thereto by invincible prejudices.

Secondly, Nevertheless, when it so happens, that persons in high stations in the church have their eyes enlightened, and see the corruptions and deficiencies of it, they must incur the prophetic censures in the highest degree, if they still concur, nay, if they do not endeavour to reform and purge out these defilements. And though they cannot, according to this proposition, expect entire success; yet they may be blessed with such a degree, as will abundantly compensate their utmost endeavours, and rank them with the prophets and apostles.

Thirdly, As this corruption and degeneracy of the christian church has proceeded from the fallen state of mankind, and particularly of those nations to whom the gospel was first preached, and amongst whom it has been since received; so it has, all other things being supposed to remain the same, suited our

circumstances, in the best manner possible, and will continue to do so, as long as it subsists. God brings good out of evil, and draws men to himself in such manner as their natures will admit of, by external pomp and power, by things not good in themselves, and by some that are profane and unholy. He makes use of some of their corruptions, as means of purging away the rest. The impurity of mankind is too gross to unite at once with the strict purity of the gospel. The *Roman* empire first, and the *Goths* and *Vandals* afterwards, required, as one may say, some superstitions and idolatries to be mixed with the christian religion; else they could not have been converted at all.

Fourthly, It follows from these considerations, that good men ought to submit to the ecclesiastical powers that be, for conscience sake, as well as to the civil ones. They are both from God, as far as respects inferiors. Christ and his apostles observed the law, and walked orderly, though they declared the destruction of the temple, and the change of the customs established by *Moses*. Both the *Babylonians*, who destroyed *Jerusalem* the first time, and the *Romans*, who did it the second, were afterwards destroyed themselves in the most exemplary manner. And it is probable, that those who shall hereafter procure the downfall of the forms of church-government, will not do this from pure love, and christian charity, but from the most corrupt motives, and by consequence bring upon themselves, in the end, the severest chastisements. It is therefore the duty of all good christians to obey both the civil and ecclesiastical powers under which they were born, *i. e.* provided disobedience to God be not enjoined, which is seldom the case; to promote subjection and obedience in others; gently to reform and rectify, and to pray for the peace and prosperity of, their own *Jerusalem*.

P R O P.

P R O P. LXXXIII.

*It is probable, that the Jews will be restored to Palæstine.*

THIS appears from the prophecies, which relate to the restoration of the *Jews* and *Israelites* to their own land. For,

First, These have never yet been fulfilled in any sense agreeable to the greatness and gloriousness of them. The peace, power, and abundance of blessings, temporal and spiritual, promised to the *Jews* upon their return from captivity, were not bestowed upon them in the interval between the reign of *Cyrus*, and the destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Titus*; and ever since this destruction they have remained in a desolate state.

Secondly, The promises of restoration relate to the ten tribes, as well as the two of *Judah* and *Benjamin*. But the ten tribes, or *Israelites*, which were captivated by *Salmaneser*, have never been restored at all. There remains therefore a restoration yet future for them.

Our ignorance of the place where they now lie hid, or fears that they are so mixed with other nations, as not to be distinguished and separated, ought not to be admitted as objections here. Like objections might be made to the resurrection of the body; and the objections both to the one, and the other, are probably intended to be obviated by *Ezekiel's* prophecy concerning the dry bones. It was one of the great sins of the *Jews* to call God's promises in question, on account of apparent difficulties and impossibilities; and the *Sadducees*, in particular, erred concerning the resurrection, because *they knew not the scriptures, nor the power of God*. However, it is our duty to inquire, whether the ten



tribes may not remain in the countries where they were first settled by *Salmaneser*, or in some others.

Thirdly, A double return seems to be predicted in several prophecies.

Fourthly, The prophets who lived since the return from *Babylon*, have predicted a return in similar terms with those who went before. It follows therefore, that the predictions of both must relate to some restoration yet future.

Fifthly, The restoration of the *Jews* to their own land seems to be predicted in the New Testament.

To these arguments, drawn from prophecy, we may add some concurring evidences, which the present circumstances of the *Jews* suggest.

First, then, The *Jews* are yet a distinct people from all the nations amongst which they reside. They seem therefore reserved by Providence for some such signal favour, after they have suffered the due chastisement.

Secondly, They are to be found in all the countries of the known world. And this agrees with many remarkable passages of the scriptures, which treat both of their dispersion, and of their return.

Thirdly, They have no inheritance of land in any country. Their possessions are chiefly money and jewels. They may therefore transfer themselves with the greater facility to *Palestine*.

Fourthly, They are treated with contempt and harshness, and sometimes with great cruelty, by the nations amongst whom they sojourn. They must therefore be the more ready to return to their own land.

Fifthly, They carry on a correspondence with each other throughout the whole world; and consequently must both know when circumstances begin to favour their return, and be able to concert measures with one another concerning it.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, A great part of them speak and write the *Rabbinical Hebrew*, as well as the language of the country where they reside. They are therefore, as far as relates to themselves, actually possessed of an universal language and character; which is a circumstance that may facilitate their return beyond what can well be imagined.

Seventhly, The *Jews* themselves still retain a hope and expectation, that God will once more restore them to their own land.

COR. 1. May not the two captivities of the *Jews*, and their two restorations, be types of the first and second death, and of the first and second resurrections?

COR. 2. Does it not appear agreeable to the whole analogy both of the word and works of God, that the *Jews* are types both of each individual in particular, on one hand, and of the whole world in general, on the other? May we not therefore hope, that, at least after the second death, there will be a resurrection to life eternal to every man, and to the whole creation, which groans, and travails in pain together, waiting for the adoption, and glorious liberty, of the children of God?

COR. 3. As the downfall of the *Jewish* state under *Titus* was the occasion of the publication of the gospel to us Gentiles, so our downfall may contribute to the restoration of the *Jews*, and both together bring on the final publication and prevalence of the true religion; of which I shall treat in the next proposition. Thus the type, and thing typified, will coincide; the first fruits, and the lump, be made holy together.

## P R O P. LXXXIV.

*The Christian Religion will be preached to, and received by, all Nations.*

THIS appears from the exprefs declarations of Christ, and from many of his parables, also from the declarations and predictions of the apostles, and particularly from the *revelation*. There are likewise numberless prophecies in the Old Testament, which admit of no other sense, when interpreted by the events which have since happened, the coming of Christ, and the propagation of his religion.

The truth of the christian religion is an earnest and presage of the same thing, to all who receive it. For every truth of great importance must be discussed and prevail at last. The persons who believe can see no reasons for their own belief, but what must extend to all mankind by degrees, as the diffusion of knowledge to all ranks and orders of men, to all nations, kindred, tongues, and people, cannot now be stopped, but proceeds ever with an accelerated velocity. And, agreeably to this, it appears that the number of those who are able to give a reason for their faith increases every day.

But it may not be amiss to set before the reader in one view some probable presumptions for the universal publication and prevalence of the christian religion, even in the way of natural causes.

First, then, The great increase of knowledge, literary and philosophical, which has been made in this and the two last centuries, and continues to be made, must contribute to promote every great truth, and particularly those of revealed religion, as just now mentioned. The coincidence of the three remarkable events, of the reformation, the invention of printing, and the restoration of letters, with each other, in time, deserves particular notice here.

Secondly,

Secondly, The commerce between the several nations of the world is enlarged perpetually more and more. And thus the children of this world are opening new ways of communication for future apostles to spread the glad tidings of salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Thirdly, The apostasy of nominal christians, and objections of infidels, which are so remarkable in these days, not only give occasion to search out and publish new evidences for the truth of revealed religion, but also oblige those who receive it, to purify it from errors and superstitions; by which means its progress amongst the yet heathen nations will be much forwarded. Were we to propagate religion, as it is now held by the several churches, each person would propagate his own orthodoxy, lay needless impediments and stumbling blocks before his hearers, and occasion endless feuds and dissensions amongst the new converts. And it seems as if God did not intend that the general preaching of the gospel should be begun, till religion be discharged of its incumbrances and superstitions.

Fourthly, The various sects which have arisen amongst christians in late times, contribute both to purify religion, and also to set all the great truths of it in a full light, and to shew their practical importance.

Fifthly, The downfall of the civil and ecclesiastical powers, mentioned in the 81 and 82 propositions, must both be attended with such public calamities, as will make men serious, and also drive them from the countries of *christendom* into the remote parts of the world, particularly into the *East* and *West Indies*; whither consequently they will carry their religion now purified from errors and superstitions.

Sixthly, The restoration of the *Jews*, mentioned in the last proposition, may be expected to have the greatest effect in alarming mankind, and opening  
their



their eyes. This will be such an accomplishment of the prophecies, as will vindicate them from all cavils. Besides which, the careful survey of *Palæstine*, and the neighbouring countries, the study of the *Eastern* languages, of the histories of the present and ancient inhabitants, &c. (which must follow this event) when compared together, will cast the greatest light upon the scriptures, and at once prove their genuineness, their truth, and their divine authority.

Seventhly, Mankind seem to have it in their power to obtain such qualifications in a natural way, as, by being conferred upon the apostles in a supernatural one, were a principal means of their success in the first propagation of the gospel.

Thus, as the apostles had the power of healing miraculously, future missionaries may in a short time accomplish themselves with the knowledge of all the chief practical rules of the art of medicine. This art is wonderfully simplified of late years, has received great additions, and is improving every day, both in simplicity and efficacy. And it may be hoped, that a few theoretical positions well ascertained, with a moderate experience, may enable the young practitioner to proceed to a considerable variety of cases with safety and success.

Thus also, as the apostles had the power of speaking various languages miraculously, it seems possible from the late improvements in grammar, logic, and the history of the human mind, for young persons, by learning the names of visible objects and actions in any unknown barbarous language, to improve and extend it immediately, and to preach to the natives in it.

The great extensiveness of the *Rabbinical Hebrew*, and of *Arabic*, of *Greek* and *Latin*, of *Sclavonic* and *French*, and of many other languages, in their respective ways, also of the *Chinese* character, ought to be taken into consideration here.

And

And though we have not the gift of prophecy, yet that of the interpretation of prophecy seems to increase every day, by comparing the scriptures with themselves, the prophecies with the events, and, in general, the word of God with his works.

To this we may add, that when preachers of the gospel carry with them the useful manual arts, by which human life is rendered secure and comfortable, such as the arts of building, tilling the ground, defending the body by suitable clothing, &c. it cannot but make them extremely acceptable to the barbarous nations; as the more refined arts and sciences, mathematics, natural and experimental philosophy, &c. will to the more civilized ones.

And it is an additional weight in favour of all this reasoning, that the qualifications here considered may all be acquired in a natural way. For thus they admit of unlimited communication, improvement, and increase; whereas, when miraculous powers cease, there is not only one of the evidences withdrawn, but a recommendation and means of admittance also.

However, far be it from us to determine by anticipation, what God may or may not do! The natural powers, which favour the execution of this great command of our Saviour's, to preach the gospel to all nations, ought to be perpetual monitors to us to do so; and, as we now live in a more adult age of the world, more will now be expected from our natural powers. The *Jews* had some previous notices of Christ's first coming, and good persons were thereby prepared to receive him; however, his appearance, and entire conduct, were very different from what they expected; so that they stood in need of the greatest docility and humility, in order to become disciples and apostles. And it is probable, that something analogous to this will happen at Christ's second coming. We may perhaps say, that  
some

some glimmerings of the day begin already to shine in the hearts of all those, who study and delight in the word and works of God.

# PROP. LXXXV.

*It is not probable, that there will be any pure or complete Happiness, before the Destruction of this World by Fire.*

THAT the restoration of the *Jews*, and the universal establishment of the true religion, will be the causes of great happiness, and change the face of this world much for the better, may be inferred both from the prophecies, and from the nature of the thing. But still, that the great crown of glory promised to christians must be in a state ulterior to this establishment, appears for the following reasons.

First, From the express declarations of the scriptures. Thus *St. Peter* says, that the earth must be burnt up, before we are to expect *a new heaven, and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*; and *St. Paul*, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*; the celestial, glorious body, made like unto that of *Christ*, at the resurrection of the dead, being requisite for this purpose.

Secondly, The present disorderly state of the natural world does not permit of unmixed happiness; and it does not seem, that this can be rectified in any great degree, till the earth have received the baptism by fire.

But I presume to affirm nothing particular in relation to future events. One may just ask, whether *Christ's* reign of a thousand years upon earth does not commence with the universal establishment of christianity; and whether the second resurrection, the  
new

new heavens, and new earth, &c. do not coincide with the conflagration.

One ought also to add, with *St. Peter*, as the practical consequence of this proposition, that the dissolution of this world by fire is the strongest motive to an indifference to it, and to that holy conversation and godliness, which may fit us for *the new heavens, and new earth.*



## S E C T. III.

OF A FUTURE STATE AFTER THE EXPIRATION  
OF THIS LIFE.

## P R O P. LXXXVI.

*It is probable from the mere Light of Nature, that there  
will be a future State.*

I do not here mean, that mankind in ancient times did discover a future state, and reason themselves into it. This, I apprehend, is contrary to the fact, a future state having been taught all mankind by patriarchal revelations before or after the flood. Nor do I mean, that men could have done this without any assistance, primarily or secondarily, from revelation, and by mere unassisted reason. This is a problem of too deep a nature to be determined conclusively; or, if it can, we shall determine for the opposite side, as it seems to me, as soon as our knowledge of the powers of the human mind is arrived at a sufficient height. My design is only to shew, that the works of God are so far opened to us in the present age, that, when the question concerning a future state is put, we ought to determine for the affirmative, though the authority of his word be not taken into consideration. Here then I observe,

First, That it is not possible to produce any evidence against a future state; so that the probability for it must at least be equal to that against it, *i. e.* to the fraction  $\frac{1}{2}$ , if we speak according to the precise language used in the doctrine of chances. We are apt indeed to conclude, that, because what we see *is*, so what we see not, *is not*; and consequently that  
there

there is no future state, *i. e.* we make our ignorance of the means by which our existence is preserved after death, and of the manner in which we are to exist, an argument against it. But this is utterly inconclusive. Our ignorance is a nothing, and therefore can be no foundation to go upon; and we have every day instances of the mistakes which reasoning from it would lead us into. If there be really a future state, it seems very possible, that its connection with other realities in this state may afford presumptions for it; and that it does so, I shall shew in the paragraphs that follow: but, if there be no future state, this non-entity cannot have any properties or connections, upon which to erect an argument for it. We must therefore, previously to all probable arguments for a future state, own that we are ignorant whence we came, and whither we go; and that our not being able to penetrate into the dark regions beyond death, were that absolutely the case, would not be an evidence, that there is nothing in those regions. That we can both penetrate thither, and discover something in these regions, is my next business to shew. For,

Secondly, The subtle nature of sensation, thought, and motion, affords some positive presumptions for a future state. The connection of these with matter, and their dependence on it, are perhaps more fully seen in the foregoing account of vibrations and association, than in any other system that has yet been produced. However, there remains one chasm still, *viz.* that between sensation, and the material organs, which this theory does not attempt to fill up. An immaterial substance may be required for the simplest sensation; and, if so, since it does not appear how this substance can be affected by the dissolution of the gross body at death, it remains probable, that it will subsist after death, *i. e.* that there will be a future state.

Or

Or if we take the system of the materialists, and suppose matter capable of sensation, and consequently of intellect, ratiocination, affection, and the voluntary power of motion, we must, however, suppose an elementary infinitesimal body in the embryo, capable of vegetating *in utero*, and of receiving and retaining such a variety of impressions of the external world, as corresponds to all the variety of our sensations, thoughts, and motions; and, when the smallness and wonderful powers of this elementary body are considered in this view, it seems to me, that the deposition of the gross crust at death, which was merely instrumental during the whole course of life, is to be looked upon as having no more power to destroy it, than the accretion of this crust had a share in its original existence, and wonderful powers; but on the contrary, that the elementary body will still subsist, retain its power of vegetating again, and, when it does this, shew what changes have been made in it by the impressions of external objects here; *i. e.* receive according to the deeds done in the *gross* body, and reap as it has sowed.

Or, if these speculations be thought too refined, we may, however, from the evident instrumentality of the muscles, membranes, bones, &c. to the nervous system, and of one part of this to another, compared with the subtle nature of the principle of sensation, thought, and motion, infer in an obvious and popular, but probable way, that this principle only loses its present instrument of action by death. And the restitution of our mental and voluntary powers, after their cessation or derangement by sleep, apoplexies, maniacal and other disorders, prepares for the more easy conception of the possibility and probability of the same thing after death. As therefore, before we enter upon any disquisitions of this kind, the probability for a future state is just equal to that against it, *i. e.* each equal to the fraction

fraction  $\frac{1}{2}$ ; so it seems, that the first step we take, though it be through regions very faintly illuminated, does, however, turn the scale, in some measure, in favour of a future state; and that, whether the principle of thought and action within us be considered in the most philosophical light to which we can attain, or in an obvious and popular one.

Thirdly, The changes of some animals into a different form, after an apparent death, seem to be a strong argument of the forementioned power of elementary animal bodies; as the growth of vegetables from seeds apparently putrefied is of a like power in elementary vegetable bodies. And all these phenomena, with the renewals of the face of nature, awaking from sleep, recovery from diseases, &c. seem in the vulgar, most obvious, and most natural way of considering these things, to be hints and presumptions of a life after the extinction of this.

Fourthly, The great desire of a future life, with the horror of annihilation, which are observable in a great part of mankind, are presumptions for a future life, and against annihilation. All other appetites and inclinations have adequate objects prepared for them; it cannot therefore be supposed, that this sum total of them all should go ungratified. And this argument will hold, in some measure, from the mere analogy of nature, though we should not have recourse to the moral attributes of God; but it receives great additional force from considering him as our father and protector.

If it be said, that this desire is factitious, and the necessary effect of self-love; I answer, that all our other desires are factitious, and deducible from self-love, also; and that many of those which are gratified proceed from a self-love of a grosser kind. Besides, self-love is only to be destroyed by, and for the sake of, the love of God, and of our neighbour. Now the ultimate prevalency of these is a still



stronger argument for a future life, in which we may first love God, and then our neighbour in and through him.

Fifthly, The pain which attends the child during its birth or passage into this world, the separation and death of the *placenta*, by which the child received its nourishment *in utero*, with other circumstances, resemble what happens at death. Since therefore the child, by means of its birth, enters upon a new scene, has new senses, and, by degrees, intellectual powers of perception, conferred upon it, why may not something analogous to this happen at death? Our ignorance of the manner, in which this is to be effected, is certainly no presumption against it; as all who are aware of the great ignorance of man, will readily allow. Could any being of equal understanding with man, but ignorant of what happens upon birth, judge beforehand that birth was an introduction to a new life, unless he was previously informed of the suitableness of the bodily organs to the external world? Would he not rather conclude, that the child must immediately expire upon so great a change, upon wanting so many things necessary to his subsistence, and being exposed to so many hazards and impressions apparently unsuitable? And would not the cries of the child confirm him in all this? And thus we may conclude, that our birth was even intended to intimate to us a future life, as well as to introduce us into the present.

Sixthly, It would be very dissonant to the other events of life, that death should be the last; that the scene should conclude with suffering. This can scarce be reconciled to the beauty and harmony of the visible world, and to the general prepollency of pleasure over pain, and subserviency of pain to pleasure, before-mentioned. All the evils of life, of which we are judges, contribute some way to improve and perfect us. Shall therefore the last which we see,

see, and the greatest in our apprehensions, quite extinguish our existence? Is it not much more likely, that it will perfect all such as are far advanced, and be a suitable correction and preparatory to the rest? Upon supposition of a future eternal life, in which our happiness is to arise from the previous annihilation of ourselves, and from the pure love of God, and of our neighbour, it is easy to see how death may contribute more to our perfection, than any other event of our lives; and this will make it quite analogous to all the others. But that our lives should conclude with a bitter morsel, is such a supposition, as can hardly consist with the benevolence of the Deity, in the most limited sense, in which this attribute can be ascribed to him.

Seventhly, All that great *apparatus* for carrying us from body to mind, and from self-love to the pure love of God, which the doctrine of association opens to view, is an argument that these great ends will at last be attained; and that all the imperfect individuals, who have left this school of benevolence and piety at different periods, will again appear on the stage of a life analogous to this, though greatly different in particular things, in order to resume and complete their several remaining tasks, and to be made happy thereby. If we reason upon the designs of Providence in the most pure and perfect manner, of which our faculties are capable, *i. e.* according to the most philosophical analogy, we shall be unavoidably led to this conclusion. There are the most evident marks of design in this *apparatus*, and of power and knowledge without limits every where. What then can hinder the full accomplishment of the purpose designed? The consideration of God's infinite benevolence, compared with the prospect of happiness to result to his creatures from this design, adds great strength to the argument.

Eighthly, Virtue is, in general, rewarded here, and has the marks of the divine approbation; vice, the contrary. And yet, as far as we can judge, this does not always happen; nay, it seems to happen very seldom, that a good man is rewarded here in any exact proportion to his merit, or a vicious man punished exactly according to his demerit. Now these apparent inequalities in the dispensations of providence, in subordinate particulars, are the strongest argument for a future state, in which God may shew his perfect justice and equity, and the consistency of all his conduct with itself. To suppose virtue in general to be in a suffering state, and vice in a triumphant one, is not only contrary to obvious facts, but would also, as it appears to me, destroy all our reasoning upon the divine conduct. But if the contrary be laid down as the general rule, which is surely the language of scripture, as well as of reason, then the exceptions to this rule, which again both scripture and reason attest, are irrefragable evidences for a future state, in which things will be reduced to a perfect uniformity. Now, if but so much as one eminently good or eminently wicked person can be proved to survive after the passage through the gulph of death, all the rest must be supposed to survive also from natural analogy. The case of martyrs for religion, natural or revealed, deserves a particular consideration here. They cannot be said to receive any reward for that last and greatest act of obedience.

Ninthly, The voice of conscience within a man, accusing or excusing him, from whatever cause it proceed, supernatural impression, natural instinct, acquired associations, &c. is a presumption, that we shall be called hereafter to a tribunal; and that this voice of conscience is intended to warn and direct us how to prepare ourselves for a trial  
at

at that tribunal. This, again, is an argument, which analogy teaches us to draw from the relation in which we stand to God, compared with earthly relations. And it is a farther evidence of the justness of this argument, that all mankind in all ages seem to have been sensible of the force of it.

Tenthly, The general belief of a future state, which has prevailed in all ages and nations, is an argument of the reality of this future state. And this will appear, whether we consider the efficient or the final cause of this general belief. If it arose from patriarchal revelations, it confirms the scriptures, and consequently establishes itself in the manner to be explained under the next proposition. If it arose from the common parents of mankind after the flood, it appears at least to have been an antediluvian tradition. If mankind were led into it by some such reasons and analogies as the foregoing, its being general is a presumption of the justness of these reasons. The truth of the case appears to be, that all these things, and probably some others, concurred (amongst the rest, apparitions of the dead, or the belief of these, dreams of apparitions, and the seeming passage to and from another world during sleep, the body being also, as it were, dead at the same time); and that, as the other parts of the simple, pure, patriarchal religion degenerated into superstition and idolatry, so the doctrine of a future state was adulterated with fictions and fables, as we find it among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and other pagan nations.

As to the *Jews*, their high opinion of themselves on account of the covenant made with their father *Abraham*, and repeated at *Sanai*, which in its first and literal sense was merely temporal, contributed probably to make the more gross and carnal amongst them overlook the doctrine of a future state, as at-



tested either by reason or tradition. But when their captivity by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and other calamities, rendered this world contemptible and bitter to them, many, as the *Pharisees* and *Essenes*, had recourse in earnest to this great source of comfort; whilst others, adhering servilely to the letter of the law, expected only temporal prosperity under a victorious *Messiah*. However, it is not to be doubted, but that, before this, good *Jews*, particularly such as did, or were ready to lay down their lives for the sake of religion, had the support of this belief; and it appears to me, that there are many things in the Old Testament, which both shew, that the doctrine of a future state was the current opinion among the *Jews*; and also that it was attended with far less expectations, than amongst christians; whence it might easily be overlooked and neglected by carnal minds, as above noted. Their hearts were set upon temporal prosperity, for themselves considered separately, for their nation, for their posterity: all which we must, however, suppose to be more suitable to their other circumstances, and to those of the world in general, when the whole of things is taken into consideration, than if they had had more full and magnificent expectations after death.

As to the final causes of the belief of a future state amongst mankind, if we suppose, that these are either the better regulation of states, and the public happiness, or the private happiness of each individual, they would be strong arguments for the divine benevolence, and consequently for a future state; even though it be supposed, that the efficient cause was only the invention of those men, who saw that this doctrine would be useful publicly and privately. For God must, at least, have permitted this; according to the doctrine of these papers, must have caused it.

But,

But, without entering into this examination of the efficient or final causes, we may affirm, that the mere general prevalence of the doctrine of a future state is of itself a strong presumption of its truth. If it be true, it is natural, *i. e.* analogous to other things, to suppose that we should have some general expectation of it, just as in other cases, where we are nearly concerned; also that as mankind advance in knowledge and spirituality by the advanced age of the world, this doctrine should be more and more opened to them. Now this is the fact; the doctrine of a future state has, from the first memory of things in the postdiluvian world, been thus perpetually opened more and more. Therefore, *e converso*, it is probable, that the doctrine itself is true.

It may be objected to some of the arguments here alleged for a future state, that they are applicable to brutes; and therefore that they prove too much. To this we may answer, that the future existence of brutes cannot be disproved by any arguments, as far as yet appears: let therefore those which favour it be allowed their due weight, and only that. There are, besides those common to all animals, many which are peculiar to man, and those very forcible ones. We have therefore much stronger evidence for our own future existence than for that of brutes; which, again, is a thing very analogous to our circumstances. It is something more than mere curiosity; that makes benevolent persons concerned for the future welfare of the brute creation; and yet they have so much to do nearer home, for themselves, and their relatives, by way of preparation for a future state, that it would be a great misuse of time to dwell upon such foreign speculations.

The doctrine of transmigration may be considered as an argument for the future existence of all animals in one view; though a most pernicious

corruption of the practical doctrine of a future state in another.

It may farther be objected to some part of the foregoing reasoning, that the destruction of vegetables in so many various ways, that few, relatively speaking, come to perfection, with the many irregularities of the natural world, shew that God does not, in fact, bring all his works to perfection. I answer, that if vegetable life be not attended with sensation (and we do not at all know, that it is), this, with infinite other phænomena of a like kind, may be no irregularity at all. The inanimate world may, according to the present constitution of things, however irregular that may seem to us, serve, in the best possible manner, to promote the happiness of the animate. We are apt to estimate maturity in natural productions according to very narrow relative considerations. But, in truth, that herb or fruit is mature, which has answered its end in respect of animal life, the support, for instance, of a peculiar set of insects; and, if the particles of inanimate matter thus pass through the bodies of vegetables and animals in an endless revolution they may perform all the offices intended by God: or he may have fitted them for infinite other uses and offices, of which we know nothing.

But if vegetables have sensation, which may indeed be a speculation very foreign to us, but is what we cannot disprove, then vegetables may be provided for in the same manner as animals. Or, if we suppose the argument to fail here, still animals, *i. e.* those allowed by all to be so, may live hereafter, though no vegetables do identically, and few according to the ordinary course of propagation by their seeds or shoots: or the argument may fail in respect of brute animals, and extend to man alone.

## PROP. LXXXVII.

*The Christian Revelation gives us an absolute Assurance of a future State.*

THAT the reader may see more fully the degree of evidence afforded by the scriptures to this most important doctrine, I will here make the following observations.

First, then, A future state is the plain and express doctrine of the New Testament, in the obvious and literal sense of the words. It rests therefore upon the authority of the revelation itself. Hence all the miracles of Christ and his apostles, and, by consequence, of *Moses* and the prophets, all the prophecies of the scriptures, whose accomplishment is already past, and visible to us, become pledges and attestations of the truth of this doctrine. We cannot suppose, that God would have given such powers and evidences, as must necessarily propagate and establish this doctrine, was it not true. For this is the grand, and, as we may say, the only doctrine of the New Testament, and even of the Old when interpreted by the New, as it ought to be.

And, as this is the most convincing evidence even to philosophical persons, so it is almost the only one which can affect and satisfy the vulgar. But indeed what resource can any man have in things above his capacity, besides resting on those who have evidently more power, knowledge, and goodness, than himself, who have worked miracles, foretold things to come, preached and practised righteousness?

All the miracles of both the Old and New Testament were performed by Christ in effect, *i. e.* by his power and authority. He therefore must be able  
to



to preserve us from perishing utterly; and the predictions of future states in this world, which God gave to him, and he to his servant *John* and others, both before and after his coming, shew by their accomplishment, that all his other predictions, and especially the great one of a resurrection to life eternal, will also be accomplished in due time.

Secondly, The persons brought back to life again in the Old and New Testaments; and, above all, the resurrection of Christ himself, have a great tendency to strengthen the foregoing argument, and to remove all our doubts, fears, and jealousies, concerning the reality of a future state. The same may be said of the histories of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, and of the appearance of *Moses* and *Elijah* at Christ's transfiguration. As there are no footsteps back again from the grave to life, our imagination staggers, and our faith stands in need of a sensible, as well as a rational support.

Thirdly, The great readiness of the prophets and apostles, and of other good *Jews* and *Christians* after their example, to suffer death for the sake of their religion, is a singular comfort and encouragement to us. We are sure from hence, that they believed a future state themselves; and they could not but know whether or no they had the power of working miracles, had seen Christ after his death, had received divine communications, &c. They must therefore have been possessed of these undeniable evidences for a future state; they could neither be deceived themselves in this matter, nor deceive others.

Fourthly, The whole history and institutions of the *Jewish* people, when interpreted by christianity, are types and prophecies of a future state. And here the Old and New Testaments confirm and illustrate each other in the strongest manner: and the Old Testament, when interpreted by the New,  
becomes

becomes entirely spiritual, and equally expressive, with the New, of the doctrine of a future state. It may be observed of the *Psalms* particularly, that the spiritual interpretation is to us, in the present times, more easy and natural upon the whole, than the literal and temporal one.

Fifthly, If we compare what was advanced above, concerning the elementary infinitesimal body, with the scripture doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and particularly with St. *Paul's* account of it, *1 Cor.* xv. there will appear such a harmony and coincidence between the evidences from reason and those from scripture, as will greatly confirm both.

#### P R O P. LXXXVIII.

*The Rewards and Punishments of a future Life will far exceed the Happiness and Misery of this, both in Degree and Duration.*

HERE I will first consider the suggestions of the light of reason; secondly, the declarations of the scriptures.

First, then, As man appears, according to the light of reason, to be in a progressive state, it may be conjectured, or even presumed, that the rewards and punishments of a future life will exceed that happiness and misery, which are here the natural consequences of virtue and vice. However, the light of reason is not clear and certain in this point: neither can it determine, whether the happiness and misery of the next life will be pure and unmixed, or no. It may indeed shew, that each man will receive according to his deserts; but then, since there is no pure virtue or vice here, since also there may be room for both virtue and vice hereafter, the rewards and punishments of the next life may succeed each other at short intervals, as in the present: or, if we adopt  
the

the mechanical system throughout, then we can only hope and presume, that God will ultimately make the happiness of each individual to outweigh his misery, finitely or infinitely; and shall be entirely uncertain, whether or no, at the expiration of this life, we shall pass into another, in like manner, chequered with happiness and misery: and thus one of the principal motives to virtue and piety would be lost.

It is true indeed, that the heathens had their *Elysium* and *Tartarus*; but then these doctrines were probably the corrupted remains of some traditional revelation; and so contribute to strengthen the real doctrine of the Scriptures on this head, which I am to set forth in the next place.

The scriptures then represent the state of the good hereafter, as attended with the purest and greatest happiness; and that of the wicked as being exquisitely and eternally miserable. And though the words translated *eternal* and *for ever*, in the Old and New Testaments, do not seem to stand for an absolute metaphysical infinity of duration, as we now term it, yet they certainly import a duration of a great relative length, and may import any long period of time, short of an absolute eternity. The scriptures therefore, in their declarations, concerning the degree and duration of future rewards and punishments, lay before us the strongest motives to obedience; such as, if duly considered, would rouse and alarm our hopes and fears, and all our faculties, to the utmost; excite to the most earnest prayers; and mortify instantly to the things of this world.

Now, though reason cannot discover this to us, or determine it absolutely, as just now remarked; yet it approves it, when discovered and determined previously. At least, it approves of the pure and indefinite happiness of the good, and acquiesces in the indefinite punishment of the wicked. For we  
always

seem ready to expect a state of pure holiness and happiness from the infinite perfection of the Deity; and yet the present mixture of happiness with misery, and of virtue with vice, also any future degree of vice and misery, may be reconciled to infinite perfection and benevolence, upon supposition that they be finally overpowered by their opposites: or, if we consult the dictates of the moral sense alone, without entering into the hypothesis of mechanism, the pure misery of the wicked, under certain limitations as to degree and duration, may be reconciled to the mercy of God, and will be required by his justice. But the moral sense was certainly intended to warn us concerning futurity.

It will not be improper here to remark, that the scriptures favour our first notions concerning pure virtue and happiness, by the mention of a paradisiacal state, as the original one, in which man was placed; and by representing our future happiness, as a restoration to this state. They take notice therefore of that greatest of all difficulties, the introduction of evil into the works of an infinitely benevolent being; and by ascribing it to sin, the thing which is most opposite to God, raise an expectation, that it must be entirely overcome at last.

#### P R O P. LXXXIX.

*It is probable, that the future Happiness of the Good will be of a spiritual Nature; but the future Misery of the Wicked may be both corporeal and mental.*

THESE are points in which the scriptures have not been explicit. It is therefore our duty to beware of vain curiosity, and to arm ourselves with a deep humility. We are not judges, what degree of knowledge is most suited to our condition. That there  
will



will be a future state at all, has not been discovered, with certainty, to a great part of mankind; and we may observe in general, that God conceals from us all particular things of a distant nature, and only gives us general notices of those that are near; and sometimes not even so much as this, where a peculiar duty, or design of providence, requires otherwise. However, as we are obliged to read and meditate upon the scriptures, to examine our own natures, and to compare them with the scriptures, we seem authorized to make some inquiry into this high and interesting point.

Now it appears from the foregoing theory, as well as from other methods of reasoning, that the love of God, and of his creatures, is the only point, in which man can rest; and that the first, being generated by means of the last, does afterwards purify, exalt, and comprehend it. In like manner, the scriptures place our ultimate happiness in singing praises to God, and the Lamb; in becoming one with God, and members of Christ, and of each other; which phrases have a remarkable agreement with the foregoing deductions from reason: and we seem authorized to conclude from both together, that the future happiness of the blessed will consist in contemplating, adoring, and loving God; in obeying his commands; and, by so doing, ministering to the happiness of others; rejoicing in it, and being partakers of it.

It seems probable also, both from some passages of the scriptures, and from the analogy of our natures, that our attachments to dear friends and relations, for whom we are *not to sorrow as they that have no hope*, and our esteem and affection for eminently pious persons in former ages, for *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and *the spirits of other just men made perfect*, will still subsist on our arrival at the true mount Sion, and the heavenly Jerusalem.

It

It may be conjectured farther, that the glorified body will not be capable of pleasures that may be called corporeal, in the same sense as the present bodily pleasures are; but only serve as the eye and ear do to spiritual religious persons, *i. e.* be a mere instrument and inlet to the refined pleasures of benevolence and piety.

Is it not probable, that this earth, air, &c. will continue to be the habitations of the blessed? It seems to me, that a very wonderful agreement between philosophical discoveries, and the scriptures, will appear hereafter. Some instances, and many hints, of this agreement may be seen in Mr. *Whiston's* works. Only let us always remember, that we must think and speak upon the things of another world, much more imperfectly than children do concerning the pleasures, privileges, and occupations of manhood.

With respect to the punishments of the wicked in a future state, we may observe, that these may be corporeal, though the happiness of the blessed should not be so. For sensuality is one great part of vice, and a principal source of it. It may be necessary therefore, that actual fire should feed upon the elementary body, and whatever else is added to it after the resurrection, in order to burn out the stains of sin. The elementary body may also perhaps bear the action of fire for ages, without being destroyed, like the *caput mortuum* or *terra damnata*, of the chemists. For this *terra damnata* remains after the calcination of vegetable and animal substances by intense and long continued fires. The destruction of this world by fire, spoken of both in the scriptures, and in many profane writings, the phænomena of comets, and of the sun and fixed stars, those vast bodies of fire, which burn for ages, the great quantity of sulphureous matter contained in the bowels of the earth, the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* by fire and brimstone, alluded to in the New Testament,

the

the representation of future punishment under the emblem of the fire of *Gebenna*, and, above all, the express passages of scripture, in which it is declared, that the wicked shall be punished by fire, even everlasting fire, confirm this position concerning the corporeal nature of future punishment, as well as give light to one another.

The same considerations confirm the long duration of future punishment. For if the earth be supposed to be set on fire, either by the near approach of a comet, or by some general fermentation in its own bowels, just as the deluge was caused partly by waters from the heavens, partly by those of the great deep, it may burn for many revolutions, either in a planetary or a cometary orbit; and these may be the *ages of ages*, spoken of in the *Apocalypse*. Further, if the duration of Christ's reign upon earth for a thousand years be estimated, as interpreters have with apparent reason estimated other durations in the prophetic writings, by putting a day for a year, then will this reign continue for 360,000 years. And since it appears to be previous to the punishment in the lake of fire, and limited, whereas that punishment is to endure *for ages of ages*, that is, for an indefinitely long period of time, one may perhaps conjecture, that this punishment is to be of longer duration than the reign of Christ upon earth for 360,000 years. But these things are mere conjectures. God has not been pleased to discover the kind, degree, or duration of future punishment in explicit terms. However, the sacred writings concur every where with the voice of reason in alarming us to the utmost extent of our faculties, lest we come into that place of torment. The punishments threatened to the body politic of the *Jews* have fallen upon it in the heaviest and most exemplary manner. The *Jews*, considered as a body politic, have now been in a state of suffering, without any interval  
of



of relaxation, for almost seventeen hundred years; during which time they have been like *Cain* the elder brother, who slew *Abel*, because he was more righteous than himself, and his sacrifice more acceptable than his own, fugitives and vagabonds over the face of the earth: they have been persecuted and slain every where, having the indelible mark of circumcision set upon them, to which they still adhere most tenaciously, and which has been a principal means of preventing their apostatizing from their own religion, after they grow up to adult age. And this may serve as a type and evidence of the certainty and greatness of future punishment, shewing that it will be greater, and more lasting, than human foresight could possibly have conjectured; just as their final restoration seems to presage the final redemption and salvation of the most wicked. And therefore, according to that earnest and affectionate admonition of our Saviour, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

But if the punishments of another world should be corporeal in some measure, there is still the greatest reason to believe, that they will be spiritual also; and that by selfishness, ambition, malevolence, envy, revenge, cruelty, profaneness, murmuring against God, infidelity, and blasphemy, men will become tormentors to themselves, and to each other; deceive, and be deceived; infatuate, and be infatuated; so as not to be able to repent, and turn to God, till the appointed time comes, if that should ever be.

But we are not to suppose, that the degree, probably not the duration of future punishment, corporeal or mental, will be the same to all. It may also perhaps be, that there may be some alleviating circumstances, or even some admixture of happiness. Only the scriptures do not authorize any such conjectures; and therefore we ought to proceed with the utmost caution, lest we lead ourselves or others into a fatal mistake. And indeed, if the happiness of



the blessed be pure and unmixed, as the scriptures seem to declare, and reason to hope, then may the misery of the wicked be unmixed also. Nevertheless, since the goodness of God has no opposite, analogy does not here require that conclusion.

### P R O P. XC.

*It seems probable, that the Soul will remain in a State of Inactivity, though perhaps not of Insensibility, from Death to the Resurrection.*

SOME religious persons seem to fear, lest by allowing a state of insensibility to succeed immediately after death, for some hundreds, or perhaps thousands of years, the hopes and fears of another world should be lessened. But we may affirm, on the contrary, that they would be increased thereby. For time, being a relative thing, ceases in respect of the soul, when it ceases to think. If therefore we admit of a state of insensibility between death and the resurrection, these two great events will fall upon two contiguous moments of time, and every man enter directly into heaven or hell, as soon as he departs out of this world, which is a most alarming consideration.

That the soul is reduced to a state of inactivity by the deposition of the gross body, may be conjectured from its entire dependence upon the gross body for its powers and faculties, in the manner explained in the foregoing part of this work. It seems from hence, that neither the elementary body, nor the immaterial principle, which is generally supposed to preside over this, can exert themselves without a set of suitable organs. And the scriptures of the New Testament, by speaking of the resurrection of the body as synonymous to a future life, favour this conjecture. There are also many passages in the Old Testament,

Testament, and some in the New, which intimate death to be a state of rest, silence, sleep, and inactivity, or even of insensibility. However, there are other passages of scripture, which favour the opposite conjecture. It seems also, that motion, and consequently perception, may not cease entirely in the elementary body after death; just as in the seeds of vegetables there is probably some small intestine motion kept up, during winter, sufficient to preserve life, and the power of vegetation, on the return of the spring. And thus the good may be in a state of rest, tranquillity and happiness, upon the whole rather pleasant than painful, and the wicked in a contrary state. Some imperfectly good persons may also receive what remains of the necessary purification, during the interval between death and the resurrection. And, upon the whole, we may guess, that though the soul may not be in an insensible state, yet it will be in a passive one, somewhat resembling a dream; and not exert any great activity till the resurrection, being perhaps roused to this by the fire of the conflagration. For analogy seems to intimate, that the resurrection will be effected by means strictly natural. And thus every man may rise in his own order, agreeably to the words of *St. Paul*.

However, let it be remembered, that all our notions concerning the intermediate state are mere conjectures. It may be a state of absolute insensibility on one hand, or of great activity on the other. The scriptures are not explicit in this matter, and natural reason is utterly unequal to the task of determining in it. I have just hinted a middle opinion, as being more plausible perhaps than either extreme. Such inquiries and disquisitions may a little awaken the mind, and withdraw it from the magical influences of this world: and, if the children of this world find a pleasure and advantage in ruminating upon their views and designs in it, much more may the children of another world, by making that the subject of their meditations and inquiries.

## S E C T. IV.

## OF THE TERMS OF SALVATION.

WE have seen in the foregoing section the greatness of the rewards and punishments of a future life. Now this is a point of infinite importance to us to be practically and duly considered. It is of infinite practical importance to come within the terms of salvation at the day of judgment. Though all God's creatures should be made happy at last indefinitely, yet still there is in the way in which we do, and must, and ought to conceive of these things, an infinite practical difference, whether at the resurrection we enter into the *new Jerusalem*, and the *kingdom of heaven*, or whether we be cast into the *lake of fire*, whose smoke ascendeth up for ever and ever. Let us inquire therefore, what are the terms of salvation after this short life is ended, *i. e.* what degree of purity and perfection is required of us here, in order to be rescued from the miseries of another world, and advanced into the glorious mansions of the blessed.

## P R O P. XCI.

*It follows from the foregoing Theory of our intellectual Pleasures and Pains, that the Bulk of Mankind are not qualified for pure unmixed Happiness.*

FOR the bulk of mankind are by no means so far advanced in self-annihilation, and in the love of God, and of his creatures in and through him, as appears, from the tenor of the foregoing observations, to be required for the attainment of pure happiness. There  
are

are few, even in christian countries, that so much as know what the true religion and purity of the heart is; at least, that attend to it with care and earnestness, and in pagan countries still fewer by far. How exceedingly few then must that *little flock* be, whose wills are broken and subjected to the divine will, who delight in happiness wherever they see it, who look upon what concerns themselves with indifference, and are perpetually intent upon their Father's business, in any proper sense of these words! And as experience shews us, that men are not carried from worldly-mindedness to heavenly-mindedness, nor advanced from lower degrees of the last to higher in general, but by passing through pain and sorrow; so there is the greatest reason from the mere light of nature to apprehend, that the bulk of mankind must suffer after death, before they can be qualified for pure and spiritual happiness. If what we have felt here does not cure us of sensuality, selfishness, and malevolence, there is the greatest reason from analogy to apprehend, that severer punishments will be applied hereafter for that purpose.

## P R O P. XCII.

*It follows from the Declarations of the Scriptures, that the Bulk of Mankind are not qualified for the Mansions of the Blessed.*

FOR, according to the scriptures, *the gate that leadeth to life is strait, and there are few who find it, even though they seek to enter in.* The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, of the formal professors, who yet are no adulterers, extortioners, &c. will not be in anywise sufficient. *Many are called, and but few chosen;* and, agreeably hereto, the first fruits, which are a scripture type of the



chosen or elect, are small in comparison of the lump. In like manner, the *Jews* are few in comparison of the Gentiles; the 144,000 in comparison of all the tribes; the *Israelites*, in comparison of all *Abraham's* seed; *Elijah*, and the 7000 in comparison of the priests and worshippers of *Baal*. Thus also *Noah*, and his family, alone, were preserved at the deluge; and of the *Israelites* a remnant only is saved, whilst the rest are rejected. And the reason of this smallness of the elect, the thing here typified, appears from the conditions. For we must take up our cross daily, hate father and mother, and even our own lives, else we cannot be Christ's disciples. We cannot serve God and *mammon* together. We must seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, first; hunger and thirst after it; and leave all to follow Christ. We must be born again, *i. e.* have quite new dispositions, and take pleasure in works of piety and charity, as we formerly did in sensual enjoyments, in honour and profit; we must be transformed by the renewal of our minds, walk according to the spirit, have our hearts in heaven, and do all to the glory of God. We must pray always; rejoice in tribulation; count all things as dung in comparison of the knowledge of Christ, and him crucified; clothe the naked, feed the hungry, visit the sick, preach the gospel in all nations. If there be strife or vain-glory, schisms or divisions, amongst us, we are still carnal. If there be wrath, clamour, evil-speaking, covetousness, we cannot inherit the kingdom of God. If we govern not our tongues; we deceive ourselves; our religion is vain. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are inconsistent with the love of the Father, *i. e.* with happiness, with freedom from tormenting fear. Though we give all our goods to feed the poor, and our bodies to be burnt, even suffer martyrdom,

martyrdom, it profiteth nothing, unless we have that charity, that love, which seeketh not her own, but rejoiceth in the truth, &c. *i. e.* unless we become indifferent to ourselves, and love God, and his truth, glory, and goodness, manifested in his creatures; alone. This world, with the bulk of its inhabitants, is all along in scripture represented as doomed to destruction, on account of the degeneracy, idolatry, wickedness, which every where prevail in it. The true *Jews* and christians are a separate people, in the world, not of the world, but hated and persecuted by it, because they shine as lights *in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation*, which cannot bear the light, &c. &c. for it would be endless to transcribe texts to this purpose. If a man has but courage to see and acknowledge the truth, he will find the same doctrine expressed or implied in every part of the Bible.

### P R O P. XCIII.

*To apply the foregoing Doctrine, as well as we can, to the real Circumstances of Mankind.*

HERE we may observe, First, That, lest the best of men, in considering the number and greatness of their sins, and comparing them with the purity of the scripture precepts, and the perfection of God, should not dare to look up to him with a filial trust and confidence in him, lest their hearts should fail, Christ our Saviour is sent from heaven, God manifest in the flesh, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; that, though our sins be as scarlet, they should by him, by means of his sufferings, and our faith, be made as white as wool; and the great punishment, which must otherwise have been inflicted upon us according to what we call the course of nature, be averted. Faith then in Christ the righteous will sup-

ply the place of that righteousness, and sinless perfection, to which we cannot attain.

Secondly, And yet this faith does not make void the law, and strict conditions, above described; but, on the contrary, establishes them. For no man can have this faith in Christ, but he who complies with the conditions. To have a sense of our sins, to be humble and contrite, and in this state of mind to depend upon Christ as the mediator between God and man, as able and willing to save us, which is true faith, argues such a disposition, as will shew itself in works. And if our faith falls short of this, if it does not overcome the world, and shew itself by works, it is of no avail; it is like that of the devils, who *believe and tremble*. Men must labour therefore after this faith as much as after any other christian grace, or rather as much as after all the others; else they cannot obtain it. For it contains all the other christian graces; and we can never know, that we have it, but by our having the christian graces, which are its fruits.

Thirdly, Hence it follows, that a mere assurance, or strong persuasion, of a man's own salvation, is neither a condition, nor a pledge of it. The faith above described *is*; and so are all other christian graces, love, fear, trust, repentance, regeneration, &c. when duly advanced and improved, so as to beget and perfect each other. But there is great reason to fear, both from the foregoing theory of the human mind, and from plain experience, that such a strong persuasion may be generated, whilst men continue in many gross corruptions; and that especially if they be first persuaded, that this strong persuasion or assurance of salvation is a condition and pledge of it, and be of sanguine tempers. For, if they be of fearful and melancholy ones, a contrary effect may be expected. All this appears from the foregoing theory of assent and dissent. Eager de-  
fires

fires are attended with hope in the sanguine, the vain-glorious, and the self-conceited; and this hope, as it increases, becomes a comfortable assurance and persuasion, drawing to itself by degrees the inward sentiments, that attend upon assent. On the contrary, eager desires in the scrupulous, superstitious, and dejected, end in fear and dissent. But if this dejection should pass into the opposite state, then the anxious diffidence may at once, as it were, pass into its opposite, a joyful persuasion.

But the chief thing to be observed here is, that the scriptures no where make an assurance of salvation the condition or pledge of it. Unless therefore it could be shewn to be included in faith, love, fear, and other scripture conditions, the doctrine of assurance, as it seems to be taught by some persons, cannot be justified by the scriptures. But all the christian graces may exist without an explicit assurance of, or even reflection upon, a man's own salvation; and fear, in particular, does not admit of this assurance. At the same time it ought to be remembered, that all acts of faith, love, trust, gratitude, exercised towards God, leave peace and comfort in the mind; and that the frequent meditation upon the joys of another life, as our hope and crown, will excite us powerfully to obedience. We ought therefore to labour and pray most earnestly for the perpetual increase of the hope of salvation; yet waiting patiently for it, if it should be delayed through bodily indisposition, or any other cause.

Fourthly, If it be asked, where the privilege and advantage of faith lies, since works are necessary also, according to the foregoing account of it; I answer, First, That the righteousness and sufferings of Christ, with our faith in them, are necessary to save us from our sins, to enable us to perform our imperfect righteousness; and, Secondly, That faith is proposed by the scriptures as the means appointed



ed by God for rendering imperfect righteousness equivalent, in his sight, to perfect, and even of transforming it into perfect, as soon as we are freed from that body of flesh and death, which wars against the law of our minds. And, as faith thus improves righteousness, so every degree of righteousness is a proportional preparative for faith; and, if it does not produce faith, will end in self-righteousness, and *Satanical* pride.

Fifthly, If it be alleged, in favour of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and exclusively of works, that if the greatest sinner should, in the midst of his sins and impieties, stop at once, and, with a deep sense of them, earnestly desire forgiveness of God through Christ, firmly believing in him as his saviour, we cannot suppose, that God would reject him; I answer, that this deep sense of sin, this earnest prayer, and firm belief, are things not to be attained in a short space of time, according to the usual course of nature. A sinner cannot be stopped at all in the career of his sins, but by suffering; and there may indeed be a degree of suffering so great, as to work the due contrition in any given short interval of time, according to the course of nature. But it does not appear from experience, that an effectual reformation is generally wrought in great sinners by common calamities, nor even by very severe ones; though the suffering, one may hope, is not lost; but will here or hereafter manifest its good effects. However, some few there are, who, recovering from a dangerous sickness, or other great affliction, shew that their change of mind was of a permanent nature; that they were made *new creatures*; and that they had a real practical faith, sufficient to overcome the world, generated in them. Now, such a faith, though it have not time to evidence itself by works, will undoubtedly be accepted

cepted by God; since he knows, that time alone is wanting.

Sixthly, It will be asked then, What are we to do for those unhappy persons, who have neglected to make use of the means of grace in due time, and who are seized by some fatal disease in the midst of their sins? I answer, that we must exhort them to strive to the utmost, to pray that they may pray with faith, with earnestness, with humility, with contrition. As far as the dying sinner has these graces, no doubt they will avail him, either to alleviate his future misery, or to augment his happiness. And it seems plainly to be the doctrine of the scriptures, that all that can be done, must be done in this life. After death we enter into a most durable state of happiness or misery. We must here, as in all other cases, leave the whole to God, who judgeth not as man judgeth. Our compassion is as imperfect and erroneous, as our other virtues, especially in matters where we ourselves are so deeply concerned. The greatest promises are made to fervent prayer. Let therefore not only the dying person himself, but all about him, who are thus moved with compassion for him, fly to God in this so great distress; not the least devout sigh or aspiration can be lost. God accepts the widow's mite, and even a cup of cold water, when bestowed upon a disciple and representative of Christ. And if the prayer, love, faith, &c. either of the sinner himself, or of any one else, be sufficiently fervent, he will give him repentance unto salvation. But how shall any of us say this of ourselves? This would be to depend upon ourselves, and our own abilities, instead of having faith in Christ alone.

These awakening considerations may be thought to lead to despair. But the despair arising from them appears to be infinitely safer, than that enthusiastic faith, or rather presumption, which is sometimes the

the consequence of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. If indeed a man's despair should make him neglect God in his last moments, put away the thoughts of his sins, and harden himself in a careless stupidity with respect to his future condition, this would be the worst state on this side the grave. But it is evident, that the foregoing considerations, have no such tendency. Where a man is so terrified, that, like *David*, his heart fails him, or, like the publican, he dares not look up; that he does not think himself worthy of the high title of the child of God, or of admission into the kingdom of heaven, all these emotions, all the agonies of this kind of despair, have a great tendency to better him, to purify and perfect him, to humble him, to break his stubborn will; and, though he should not be able to pray but by the *groanings that are unutterable*, God, who knows the mind of the spirit, which is now working in him *a repentance not to be repented of*, i. e. if these groanings be sufficiently earnest, will accept him. If they fall short of the gospel terms, whatever these be, he will, however, be beaten with fewer stripes. And it must be remembered, that the question is not whether a man shall die here in apparent peace, so as to comfort the friends and by-standers under their alarming sense of fear for themselves, and compassion for him, but whether he shall awake in joy or torment. The despair, which arises from a fear, lest our remaining disposition to sin be so great, our faith and love so weak, and our prayer so languid, as that we do not come up to the gospel terms, is no offence against the divine goodness. We are to estimate this goodness in its particular manifestations by God's promises alone; and to do otherwise, would be to open a door to all wickedness, and lead ourselves into the most fatal mistakes. The scriptures declare in the most express terms, that works are necessary to salvation. Faith

is never said to be effectual, when not attended by works; but, on the contrary, the true faith is emphatically characterized by its producing works. This faith is itself a work, as much as any other, the cause and the effect of the others, all proceeding from one universal cause through Christ. How then can we flatter ourselves, that a mere strong persuasion or assurance of salvation, of the application of Christ's merits to a man's self in particular, will be of any avail? Especially since it is evident, from the nature of the mind, that such a persuasion may be generated in a wicked man; and also from experience, that it is sometimes found in such.

I have here endeavoured to treat this most important subject with the greatest fidelity, and regard to truth. God's ways are indeed infinitely above our ways, *i. e.* infinitely more merciful in reality, ultimately, than we can express or conceive. But all the threatenings of the scriptures have been fulfilled hitherto, as well as the promises. *There is no peace to the wicked.* The faith, which removeth mountains, availeth nothing without charity. *Not he that saith unto Christ, Lord, Lord, i. e.* merely applies to him for mercy and assistance, *but he that doth the will of God, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* And we must not, we cannot, explain away these express passages.

As in the body, so in the mind, great and lasting changes are seldom wrought in a short time; and this the history of association shews to be the necessary consequence of the connection between body and mind. And yet he who made the blind to see, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the lepers clean, and the maimed whole, by a word, can as easily perform the analogous things, the antitypes, in the mind. But then it is to be observed, that the bodily changes by miracles were not made by our Saviour, except in consequence of previous changes in the mind.

And



And thus indeed to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly. Love, faith, fear, prayer, will carry men on in a very rapid progress. But then the work of regeneration is already advanced in them. It is of infinite consequence not to lay a stumbling-block, or rock of offence, in our own way, or in that of other's; not to *break the least commandment, or teach others so to do*. Let us not be deceived, God is not mocked; *what a man soweth, that shall he also reap*. Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, must come upon every soul of man that does evil, upon every child of disobedience.

Seventhly, It follows from the purity of the scripture precepts, that even the better sort of christians may be under considerable uncertainties as to their own state; and that in many cases, as a man grows better, and consequently sees more distinctly his own impurity, he will have greater fears for himself, and perhaps think, that he grows worse. Now the final cause of this is undoubtedly, that we may make our calling and election sure, and lest he that thinketh he standeth should fall. And yet, as wicked persons, let them endeavour ever so much to stupefy themselves, must have frequent forebodings of the judgment that will be past upon them at the last day; so good persons will generally have great comforts in the midst of their sorrows. The scripture promises are so gracious and unlimited, the precepts for loving God, and rejoicing in him, so plain and express, and the histories of God's mercies towards great sinners, and the great sins of good men, are so endearing, that whoever reads and meditates upon the scripture daily, will find *light spring up to him in the midst of darkness; will hope against hope, i. e.* will hope for the mercy of God, though he has the greatest doubts and fears in relation to his own virtue, faith, love, hope; and fly to him, as his father and saviour, for that very reason. This will beget earnest and incessant

cessant prayer, a perpetual care not to offend, and a reference of all things to God. When such a person surveys his own actions, and finds that he does in many instances of thought, word, and deed, govern himself by the love and fear of God, by a sense of duty, by the gospel motives of future reward and punishment, &c. these are to him evident marks, that the spirit of God works with his spirit; he is encouraged to have confidence towards God; and this confidence spurs him on to greater watchfulness and earnestness, if he does not dwell too long upon it. When, on the other hand, he finds many unmortified desires, and many failings in his best words and actions, with some gross neglects perhaps, or even some commissions, this terrifies and alarms him; adds wings to his prayers, and zeal to his endeavours. And it is happy for us, in this world of temptations, to be thus kept between hope and fear. Not but that very good persons, who have been constant and earnest for a long course of time, who have passed through severe trials, who live, as the first christians did, in perpetual apprehensions of sufferings and death, or who, like their blessed Lord and Master, go about doing good, and preaching the gospel to the poor, may be always favoured with the sight of the promised land; and several of these may date the rise of this happy state from some remarkable point in their lives. But there is great danger of being imposed upon here by the wonderful subtlety of the natural operations of the mind. When a man begins to fancy, that an inward sentiment, much or long desired by him, such as the assurance of his salvation, has happened or will happen to him, this imposes upon his memory by imperceptible degrees in one case; and begets the sentiment itself, the assurance, in the other. Such a factitious assurance can therefore be no evidence for itself. It is a mental affection, of the same kind with  
the

the rest; and can less be depended upon, as a test, than plain actions. Mere ideas, and internal feelings, must be less certain marks of the prevailing, permanent disposition of our hearts, than the tenor of our actions, which is the natural and necessary fruit of it. And we ought to judge of ourselves by our fruits, as well as of those who pretend to be prophets. *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree good fruit.* Here we may lay our foundation, as upon a rock. When indeed this persuasion, or assurance, is the result of an earnest impartial examination into our fruits, and of our conscience not condemning us, it may reasonably afford confidence towards God; because our conscience was intended by God to inform us of our state; as appears both from scripture and reason. But a constant absolute assurance, *i. e.* appearance thereof (for it can be no more, till we have escaped all the hazards of this life, and our judge has passed his sentence upon us in another), may be dangerous even to good men, and render them by insensible degrees secure, neglectful of necessary duties, and self-conceited. However, since a hope, free from all anxious fears, seems to be often given by God as a comfort in great trials, and a reward for behaving well under such, and persevering faithfully, as I observed just now; we have the greatest encouragement to do and to suffer every thing that God requires of us, to be *servant in spirit, serving the Lord, to watch and pray always, &c.* since we may expect to obtain this hope thereby, and in it an hundred fold for all that we give up in this world, as well as everlasting life in the world to come.

And though it be proper to comfort religious persons under bodily or mental disorders, which fill their minds with disproportionate fears and scruples, by informing them, that a solicitude about our salvation is the sure means of obtaining it; that this affliction is to be

be endured with patience, and confidence in God, as much as any other; that it is attended with the same advantages as common afflictions, and also with some peculiar to itself, such as putting us upon a thorough examination of our hearts; and that this severe chastening in the present world is the strongest mark, that we are loved by God, and therefore shall be saved in the world to come; yet the same persons are to be admonished, that a great degree of fearfulness and scrupulosity often proceeds from some self-deceit and prevarication at the bottom. There is probably some secret sin, some sin that circumvents them more easily and frequently than the rest, of which they may not perhaps be fully aware, and yet about which they have great suspicions and checks, if they would hearken to them fully and fairly. They ought therefore, with all earnestness and honesty, to desire God to try and examine them, and to seek the ground of their hearts; and, in consequence of this prayer, to set about it themselves in the presence of God. And if this be necessary for the scrupulous and feeble-minded, even for the children of God, how much more for the careless, voluptuous, profane world! How ought they to be alarmed and exhorted to hear the voice of wisdom in the present life, during *the accepted time, lest fear come upon them as desolation, and destruction as a whirlwind!*

Lastly, We may observe, that as undue confidence leads to security, and consequently to such sins, as destroy this confidence, unless we be so unhappy, as to be able to recal the internal feeling of this confidence without sufficient contrition; and as the disproportionate fearfulness, which is its opposite, begets vigilance, and thus destroys itself also; whence persons in the progress of a religious course are often passing from one extreme to another; so it is difficult for serious persons, in thinking or speaking about the terms of salvation, to rest in any particular point;



they are always apt to qualify the last decision, whatever it be, either with some alarming caution, or comfortable suggestion, lest they should mislead themselves or others. This is part of that obscurity and uncertainty, which is our chief guard and security in this state of probation, and the *daily bread* of our souls. Let me once more add this necessary observation, viz. that future eternal happiness is of infinitely more weight than present comfort; and therefore that we ought to labour infinitely more after purity and perfection, than even after spiritual delights. We are only upon our journey through the wilderness to the land of *Canaan*; and, as we cannot want manna from day to day for our support, it is of little concernment, whether we have more delicious food. Let us therefore *hunger and thirst after righteousness* itself; that so we may first *be filled* with it, and afterwards, in due time, may obtain that *eternal weight of glory*, which will be the reward of it.

## S E C T. V.

OF THE FINAL HAPPINESS OF ALL MANKIND IN  
SOME DISTANT FUTURE STATE.

## P R O P. XCIV.

*It is probable from Reason that all Mankind will be  
made happy ultimately.*

FOR, First, It has been observed all along in the course of this work, that all the evils that befall either body or mind in this state, have a tendency to improve one or both. If they fail of producing a peculiar, appropriated intermediate good effect, they must, however, necessarily contribute to the annihilation of that *self*, carnal or spiritual, gross or refined, which is an insuperable bar to our happiness in the pure love of God, and of his works. Now, if we reason at all concerning a future state, it must be from analogies taken from this; and that we are allowed to reason, that we are able to do it with some justness, concerning a future state, will appear from the great coincidence of the foregoing natural arguments for a future state, and for the rewards and punishments of it, with what the scriptures have delivered upon the same heads; also because a similar kind of reasonings in respect of the future states, which succeed in order from infancy to old age, is found to be just, and to afford many useful directions and predictions. We ought therefore to judge, that the evils of a future state will have the same tendency, and final cause, as those of this life, viz. to meliorate and perfect our natures, and to prepare them for ultimate unlimited happiness in the love of God, and of his works.

Secondly, The generation of benevolence, by the natural and necessary tendency of our frames, is a strong argument for the ultimate happiness of all mankind. It is inconsistent to suppose, that God should thus compel us to learn universal unlimited benevolence ; and then not provide food for it. And both this and the foregoing argument seem conclusive, though we should not take in the divine benevolence. They are both supported by the analogy and uniformity apparent in the creation, by the mutual adaptations and correspondencies of things existing at different times, and in different places : but they receive much additional force from the consideration of the goodness of God, if that be first proved by other evidences ; as they are themselves the strongest evidences for it, when taken in a contrary order of reasoning.

And as the benevolence of one part of the creation is thus an argument for the happiness of the other ; so, since benevolence is itself happiness, a tendency to learn it in any being is also an argument for his own happiness. And, upon the whole, since God has commanded his beloved sons, the good, to love and compassionate every being, that comes within their cognizance, by the voice of their natures speaking within them, we cannot suppose, that these his favourites (to speak according to present appearances, and our necessary conceptions, which with this caution is justifiable) will fail of their proper reward in the gratification of this their benevolence.

Thirdly, The infinite goodness of God is an argument for the ultimate happiness of all mankind. This appears without any particular discussion of this attribute. But it may not be amiss for the reader just to review the evidences for it above exhibited, and their tendency to prove the ultimate happiness of all God's creatures.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The infinite happiness and perfection of God is an argument for, and, as it were, a pledge of, the ultimate happiness and perfection of all his creatures. For these attributes, being infinite, must bear down all opposition from the quarters of misery and imperfection. And this argument will be much stronger, if we suppose (with reverence be it spoken!) any intimate union between God and his creatures; and that, as the happiness of the creatures arises from their love and worship of God, so the happiness of God consists, shews itself, &c. (for one does not know how to express this properly) in love and beneficence to the creatures. As God is present every where, knows and perceives every thing, he may also, in a way infinitely superior to our comprehension, feel every where for all his creatures. Now, according to this, it would seem to us, that all must be brought to ultimate infinite happiness, which is, in his eye, present infinite happiness.

Fifthly, The impartiality of God, in respect of all his creatures, seems to argue, that, if one be made infinitely happy upon the balance, all will be made so. That benevolence, which is infinite, must be impartial also; must look upon all individuals, and all degrees of happiness, with an equal eye; must stand in a relation of indifference to them all. Now this is really so, if we admit the third of the foregoing suppositions concerning the divine benevolence. If all individuals be at last infinitely happy upon the balance, they are so at present in the eye of God, *i. e.* he is perfectly impartial to all his creatures. And thus every intermediate finite degree of misery, how great soever, may be consistent with the impartiality of God. But to suppose, before the creatures *A* and *B* existed, that *A* was made by God to be eternally happy, and *B* made to be eternally miserable, seems as irreconcilable to God's impartiality, as to his benevolence. That both should be made for



eternal and infinite happiness, one to enjoy it in one way, the other in another, one by passing through much pain, the other by passing through little or perhaps none, one by an acceleration in one period of his existence, the other in another, &c. &c. is perfectly consistent with God's impartiality; for, the happiness of each being infinite at present in the eye of God, his eye must regard them equally. And, even in the eye of finite beings, if *A*'s happiness seems less than *B*'s, in one respect, because *A* passes through more pain, it may seem greater in another, because he arrives at greater degrees of it in less time. But this is all appearance. Different finite beings form different judgments according to their different experiences, and ways of reasoning. Who therefore shall be made the standard? Not the inferior orders certainly. And, if the superior, we shall not be able to rest, till we conclude, that all that appears to all finite beings, is false and delusive; and that the judgment of the infinite being is the only true real judgment. Now I have endeavoured to shew, according to the method of ultimate ratios, how, allowing the third supposition concerning the divine goodness, all individuals are equally happy in the eye of God. And thus the impartiality of God is vindicated, according to the truth and reality of things, in the judgment of his own infinite understanding.

Sixthly, All the foregoing reasoning seems to be somewhat more short and clear upon the hypothesis of mechanism; but it is not invalidated by that of free-will. For free-will must be considered as the production of infinite power, and therefore as being suited to the rest of the divine attributes, his benevolence, happiness, and impartiality, and to all the methods, by which God conducts men to benevolence and happiness. Or, if the hypothesis of free-will be a bar to the foregoing reasonings in  
their

their full extent, it cannot, however, account for misery upon the whole, much less for eternal misery. To suppose that God wills and desires the happiness of all his creatures, and yet that he has given them a power, by which many of them will, in fact, make themselves eternally miserable, also that he foresees this in general, and even in each particular case, is either to suppose God under some fatal necessity of giving such a power; or else to take away his unlimited benevolence in reality, after that it has been allowed in words. If therefore God has given men free-will in such a measure, as that they may bring upon themselves finite misery thereby in the present state, or in any future intermediate one, we must, however, suppose it to be so restrained, as that it shall not occasion infinite and eternal misery. *The cause of the cause is also the cause of the thing caused;* which is surely as evident in the application of it to the present subject, as in any other instance, where it cannot be applied.

Seventhly, There are many obvious and undeniable arguments, taken from the relative attributes of God, which first exclude the eternal misery of his creatures, and then establish their ultimate happiness by necessary, or, at least, by probable consequence. Thus, the whole tenor of nature represents God to us as our creator, preserver, governor, friend, and father. All ages and nations have fallen into this language; and it is verified every day by the wonderful beauty, harmony, and beneficence, manifested in the works of the creation, and particularly in the exquisite make of our bodies and minds. Shall then a Creator who is a friend and father, create for eternal infinite misery? Can any intermediate suppositions, free-will, perverseness, reprobateness, &c. reconcile and unite extremes so utterly discordant? Will he preserve an existence, which ceases to afford happiness, and can now only pro-

duce misery without end? Will not the governor and judge of all the earth do right? In whatever manner sin be estimated, it must be finite, because it is the work of a finite mind, of finite principles and passions. To suppose therefore a sinner to be absolutely condemned to infinite irreversibile misery, on account of the finite sins of this life, seems most highly injurious to the justice of God. And to say, that this infinite irreversibile misery is not merely the consequence of the sins of this life, but also of those to be committed in another, is to give a power of repenting, and becoming virtuous, as well as of sinning, in another life; whence the sentence might be reversed, contrary to the supposition.

The worst man of those who go to heaven, and the best of those who go to hell, seem to us, if we will reason upon these subjects, as we do upon others, to differ but by an infinitesimal difference, as one may say; and yet the reward of the first, being eternal, however small in each finite portion of time, must at last become infinite in magnitude; and the punishment of the last in like manner. There would therefore be a double infinite difference in the reward and punishment, where the virtue and vice causing these respectively, have only an infinitely small one. To say, that, in such cases, the rewards and punishments of another life may be so conducted by a mixture of happiness and misery in each, as that the balance shall not become ultimately infinite in either, is to take away all hopes and fears relating to a future state, *i. e.* morally and practically to take away the state itself.

Again, can it be supposed, that an infinitely merciful Father will cast off his son utterly, and doom him to eternal misery, without farther trials than what this life affords? We see numberless instances of persons at present abandoned to vice, who yet, according to all probable appearances, might be reformed

reformed by a proper mixture of correction, instruction, hope, and fear. And what man is neither able nor willing to do, may and must, as should seem, be both possible to God, and actually effected by him. He must have future discipline of a severer kind for those whom the chastisements of this life did not bring to themselves. Yet still they will all be fatherly chastisements, intended to amend and perfect, not to be final and vindictive. That the bulk of sinners are not utterly incorrigible, even common observation shews; but the history of association makes it still more evident; and it seems very repugnant to analogy to suppose, that any sinners, even the very worst that ever lived, should be so, should be hardened beyond the reach of all suffering, of all selfishness, hope, fear, good-will, gratitude, &c. For we are all alike in kind, and do not differ greatly in degree here. We have each of us passions of all sorts, and lie open to influences of all sorts; so as that the persons *A* and *B*, in whatever different proportions their intellectual affections now exist, may, by a suitable set of impressions, become hereafter alike.

These and many such like reasonings must occur to attentive persons upon this subject, so as to make it highly unsuitable to the benevolence of the Deity, or to the relations which he bears to us, according to the mere light of nature, that infinite irreversible misery, to commence at death, should be the punishment of the sins of this life. And, by pursuing this method of reasoning, we shall be led first to exclude misery upon the balance, and then to hope for the ultimate unlimited happiness of all mankind.



## P R O P. XCV.

*It is probable from the Scriptures, that all Mankind will be made ultimately happy.*

IN considering the doctrine of the scriptures upon this head, it will first be requisite to shew, that the texts alleged to prove the absolutely eternal and irreversible misery of the wicked in another life, may justly be interpreted in a different sense.

Now the *Greek* words translated *eternal*, *everlasting*, and *for ever*, in the New Testament, do not by derivation stand for an absolute eternity, neither are they always used in this sense in the New Testament, the *Septuagint*, or pagan authors. The same may be said of the corresponding *Hebrew* words. It is true indeed, that they generally represent a long duration; and this is sometimes limited by the context, or nature of the subject, sometimes not. Now, according to this interpretation, the punishments of the wicked will be of great duration, suppose of one or more long ages or dispensations. But one might rather conclude from the words of the original, if their derivation be considered, that they will end at the expiration of some such long period, than that they will be absolutely eternal.

If it be said, that the eternity of God is expressed by the same words; I answer, that here the nature of the subject gives a sense to the words, whereof they are otherwise incapable. It may be urged in like manner, that the duration of future rewards is expressed by the same words; but then the absolute eternity of this duration is not perhaps deducible at all from these or any other words. We must in this entirely refer ourselves to the bounty and benevolence of our Creator, and depend upon him for all our expectations. Besides, the nature of the subject differs widely here. To suppose the  
misery

misery of the wicked to be, in every respect, equal and parallel to the happiness of the good, is quite contrary to the general tenor of the scriptures; and looks like setting up the *Manichean* doctrine of two opposite infinite principles, a doctrine every where condemned in effect, though not in express words, both by the Old and New Testament. We may add, that the happiness of the good is also denoted in scripture by incorruption, indissolubility, &c. as well as by the words applied to the punishments of the wicked.

The words of our Saviour, *where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched*, are thought by some to be a strong argument for the absolute eternity of future punishment. But as these words are taken from *Isaiab*, and allude to the punishment of the malefactors, whose carcases were suffered to rot upon the ground, or burnt in the valley of *Hinnom*, they appear to be too popular and figurative to justify such an interpretation. And yet they seem plainly intended to declare the very long duration of future punishment; and that, as the worms, which feed upon a putrefied body, or the fire, which burns it in this world, do themselves come to a certain and known period, the misery of another world, and the fire of hell, will have no definite one; but continue till they have consumed the sin and guilt which feed them. In this way of interpretation, the passage under consideration would agree with that concerning the *payment of the last farthing*.

Our Saviour's expression concerning *Judas*, viz. *that it had been good for him, that he had not been born*, cannot indeed be alleged for the proof of the eternity of future punishment; but it seems to oppose the supposition of the ultimate happiness of all. However, this expression may be popular and proverbial; or it may perhaps denote, that his last agonies, or his sufferings in another world, should outweigh

outweigh all his preceding happiness, or some way admit of an interpretation consistent with the proposition under consideration. For it does not appear to be sufficiently clear and precise for an absolute disproof of it. We may add, that as every man, who at his death falls short of the terms of salvation, whatever these be, *crucifies the Son of God afresh*, according to the language of St. Paul; so he will have reason, according to his then necessary conceptions, to wish with Judas, that he had never been born. *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!*

Now, as the words of the New Testament do not necessarily infer the absolute eternity of punishment; so the general tenor of reasoning there used, with numberless passages both of the Old and New Testaments, concerning the mercy of God, his readiness to forgive, &c. favour the contrary opinion. And this is a farther reason for interpreting these texts of an indefinitely long duration only; and that especially if the small number of them, and the infinite importance of the doctrine, which they are supposed to contain, be also taken into consideration.

To the same purpose we may observe, that there is nothing in all St. Paul's Epistles, from whence the absolute eternity of future punishment can be at all inferred, except the words, *everlasting destruction from the presence of our Lord*, 2 Theff. i. 9. though the Epistles to the *Romans* and *Hebrews* are both of them general summaries of the christian religion, and though he speaks in both of future punishment. In the Epistle to the *Romans*, he says, *Tribulation and anguish* (not eternal tribulation) shall be upon every soul of man, that doth evil; also that the wages of sin is death, not eternal death, or eternal punishment; whereas the gift of God is eternal life. In the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, he asks, of how much sorer punishment than temporal death, an apostate is

is to be thought worthy? Which seems not likely for him to do, had he believed it eternal. In like manner, there is nothing of this kind in St. *Luke's* Gospel, or his *Acts of the Apostles*, in St. *John's* Gospel, or his Epistles, or in the Epistles of St. *James*, St. *Peter*, or St. *Jude*. And yet good men now, who believe the eternity of punishment, scarce ever fail to insist upon it most earnestly in their discourses and exhortations. For, if it be a doctrine of the christian religion, it is so essential a one, as that it could not have been omitted by any inspired writer, nor fail to have been declared in the most express terms, which certainly cannot be said of any of the texts alleged to prove the eternity of punishment. The words translated *eternal*, and *for ever*, must have been ambiguous to the *Jews*, *i. e.* to the first christians; and the figurative expression, *their worm dieth not*, &c. is far less determinate than many phrases, which our Saviour might have chosen, had it been his intention to denounce absolutely eternal misery.

To this we may add, that it does not appear from the writings of the most ancient fathers, that they put such a construction upon the words of the New Testament; and the omission of this doctrine in the ancient creeds shews, that it was no original doctrine, or not thought essential; which yet could not be, if it was believed; or that many eminent persons for some centuries were of a contrary opinion. And indeed the doctrine of purgatory, as now taught by the papists, seems to be a corruption of a genuine doctrine held by the ancient fathers concerning a purifying fire.

It may perhaps be, that the absolute eternity of punishment was not received, till after the introduction of metaphysical subtleties relating to time, eternity, &c. and the ways of expressing these, *i. e.*  
not



not till after the pagan philosophy, and vain deceit, had mixed itself with and corrupted christianity.

Still farther, it does by no means appear to be consonant to the nature of the christian religion to interpret the New Testament in a strict literal manner, or adhere to phrases in opposition to the general tenor of it. Our Saviour in many places appeals to the natural equitable judgments of his auditors. The evangelists and apostles all enter into the reasons of things; the gospels are short memoirs; the epistles were written to friends, and new converts; and the nature of such writings must be very different from that of a precise determinate law, such as that of *Moses*, or the civil law of any country. And indeed herein lies one material difference between the rigid *Jewish* dispensation, and the christian, which last is called by St. *James* the *perfect law of liberty*. From all which it follows, that we are rather to follow the general tenor, than to adhere to particular expressions. And this will appear still more reasonable, when it is considered, that we are yet but novices in the language of the Old and New Testaments, the relations which they bear to each other, and their declarations concerning future events.

Another argument against interpreting the passages above referred to, in the sense of absolutely eternal misery, is, that there are many other passages, whose strict and literal sense is contrary thereto. And in such a case it seems, that the infinite goodness of God, so many ways declared in the scriptures, must soon turn the scale. For the scriptures must be made consistent with themselves; and the veracity and goodness of God seem much rather to oblige him to perform a promise, than to execute a threatening. I will mention a few passages, some of which it may be observed even establish the contrary doctrine of the ultimate happiness of all mankind.

Thus

Thus the most natural, as well as the most strict and literal sense of the words, *As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive*, is the ultimate happiness of all the children of Adam, of all mankind. God's *mercy* is declared to *endure for ever*; and he is said *not to keep his anger for ever*: which expressions, in their first and most obvious sense, are quite inconsistent with the absolute eternity of punishment. Our Saviour says, that the person who is not reconciled to his brother *shall not be discharged till he has paid the last farthing*; which intimates, that there is a time when he will be discharged. In like manner the debtor, who owed his lord ten thousand talents, is delivered over to the tormentors, till he pay these. To say that he can never pay them, because as we have all our faculties from God, so we can merit nothing from God, is to embrace the mechanical hypothesis, which, in the judgment of all, must be utterly inconsistent with the eternity of punishment. For, if a man cannot have merit, he cannot have demerit. To suppose a creature any way brought into being upon such terms as to be only capable of demerit, seems most highly injurious to the attributes of God, by whatever means this be effected, the fall of our first parents, or any other.

Again, *God in judgment remembers mercy*. This is said in general; and therefore it ought not to be confined to the judgments of this world. And to do so, when all the pleasures and pains of this world are every where in the New Testament declared unworthy of our regard in comparison of those of another, is highly unsuitable to the goodness of God. But indeed this cannot be done without departing from the most obvious literal sense. The same may be said of the passages, *God is not extreme to mark what is done amiss*; *that he is loving to every man*; *that his mercy, his tender mercy, is over all his works*, &c. Can it be said with any appearance of truth,

truth, that God will give an infinite overbalance of misery to those beings whom he loves.

It may very well be supposed, that though the punishments of a future state be finite; yet this should not be declared in so many words in the scriptures. For such a procedure would be analogous to the gradual opening of all God's dispensations of mercy. Mankind in their infant state were not able to receive such kind of nourishment; neither are all perhaps yet able. But, if future punishments be absolutely eternal, it is hard to conceive why this should not have been declared in the most express terms, and in many places of scripture; also how there should be so many passages there, which are apparently inconsistent therewith.

There remains one argument more, and of great weight in my opinion, against interpreting any passages of scripture so as to denounce absolutely eternal misery. This is, the declarations of the scriptures concerning the smallness of the number of the elect, and the great difficulty of entering in at the strait gate, already taken notice of. To suppose future punishments to be absolutely eternal, is to suppose, that the christian dispensation condemns far the greater part of mankind to infinite misery upon the balance, whilst yet it is every where declared to be a dispensation of mercy, to be *glory to God*, and *good-will to men*; which is a great apparent inconsistency. And indeed, unless the doctrine of absolutely eternal punishment be taken away, it seems impracticable to convince the world of the great purity and perfection required by the gospel in order to our entrance into the kingdom of heaven. If there be no punishment in a another state, besides what is absolutely eternal, men of very low degrees of virtue will hope to escape this, and consequently to escape with impunity: whereas, if there be a purging fire, into which all the wicked are to be cast, to remain

remain and suffer there according to their demerits, far beyond what men generally suffer in this life; and if there be only few, that are admitted to happiness after the expiration of this life, without such farther purification; what vigour and earnestness should we use to escape so great a punishment, and to be of the happy number of those, whose names are written in the book of life!

This may suffice to shew, that the absolute eternity of future punishment cannot be concluded from the scriptures. We are next to inquire what evidences they afford for the ultimate happiness of all mankind. I have already mentioned some passages, which favour this doctrine; but I intend now to propose two arguments of a more general nature.

First, then, It may be observed, that the scriptures give a sanction to most of the foregoing arguments, taken from the light of nature, for this doctrine, by reasoning in the same manner. Thus the punishments of the *Jews* and others are represented as chastisements, *i. e.* as evils tending to produce a good greater than themselves. Our benevolence to our children is represented by Christ, as an argument of the infinitely greater benevolence of God our heavenly father. God promises to make *Abraham* happy by making his posterity happy, and them happy by making them the instruments of happiness to all the nations of the earth (which they are still to be probably in a much more ample manner, than they have ever yet been). Now this shews, that the happiness, intended for us all, is the gratification of our benevolence. The goodness of God is every where represented as prevailing over his severity; he remembers good actions to thousands of generations, and punishes evil ones only to the third and fourth. Not a sparrow is forgotten before him; he giveth to all their meat in due



season; pities us, as a father does his children; and sets our sins as far from us, as heaven is from earth, &c. All which kind of language surely implies both infinite mercy in the forgiveness of sin, and infinite love in advancing his purified children. We are all the offspring of God, and, by consequence, agreeably to other phrases, are *heirs of all things, heirs of God, and coheirs with Christ, members of the mystical body of Christ, and of each other, i. e.* we are all partakers of the happiness of God, through his bounty and mercy. God is the God of the *Gentiles*, as well as of the *Jews*; and has concluded them *all in unbelief, only that he might have mercy upon all*. And, in general, all the arguments for the ultimate happiness of all mankind, taken from the relations which we bear to God, as our creator, preserver, governor, father, friend, and God, are abundantly attested by the scriptures.

Secondly, There are in the scriptures some arguments for the ultimate restoration and happiness of all mankind, which now seem sufficiently full and strong, and which yet could not be understood in former ages; at least we see, that, in fact, they were not. Of this kind is the history of the *Jewish* state, with the prophecies relating thereto. For we may observe, that, according to the scriptures, the body politic of the *Jews* must be made flourishing and happy, whether they will or no, by the severities which God inflicts upon them. Now the *Jewish* state, as has been already remarked, appears to be a type of each individual in particular, on one hand; and of mankind in general on the other.

Thus, also, it is foretold, that Christ will *subdue all things to himself*. But subjection to Christ, according to the figurative prophetic style of the scriptures, is happiness, not merely subjection by compulsion, like that to an earthly conqueror. Agreeably to this, all things are to be *gathered together in one in Christ*,  
both

both those which are *in heaven*, and those *on earth*: and St. John saw every creature in heaven, in earth, under the earth, and in the sea, and all that were in them, praising God.

The prayer of faith can remove mountains; all things are possible to it; and, if we could suppose all men defective in this article, in praying with faith for the ultimate happiness of mankind, surely our Saviour must do this; his prayer for his crucifiers cannot surely fail to obtain pardon and happiness for them.

We are commanded to love God with our whole powers, to be joyful in him, to praise him ever more, not only for his goodness to us, but also for that to all the children of men. But such love and joy, to be unbounded, presuppose unbounded goodness in God, to be manifested to all mankind in due time; else there would be some men, on whose accounts we could not rejoice in God. At the same time, the delay of this manifestation of God's goodness, with the severity exercised towards particulars, in their progress to happiness, beget submission, resignation, *fear and trembling*, in us, till at last we come to that *perfect love that casts out fear*.

It may perhaps be, that the writers of the Old and New Testaments did not see the full meaning of the glorious declarations, which the holy spirit has delivered to us by their means; just as *Daniel*, and the other prophets, were ignorant of the full and precise import of their prophecies, relating to Christ. Or perhaps they did; but thought it expedient, or were commanded, not to be more explicit. The christian religion, in converting the various pagan nations of the world, was to be corrupted by them; and the superstitious fear of God, which is one of these corruptions, may have been necessary hitherto on account of the rest. But now the corruptions of the true religion begin to be discovered, and removed, by the

earnest endeavours of good men of all nations and sects, in these latter times, by their *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*.

How far the brute creation is concerned in the redemption by Christ, may be doubted; and it does not seem to be much or immediately our business to inquire, as no relative duty depends thereon. However, their fall with *Adam*, the covenant made with them after the deluge, their serving as sacrifices for the sins of men, and as types and emblems in the prophecies, their being commanded to praise God (for every thing that hath breath is thus commanded, as well as the Gentiles), seem to intimate, that there is mercy in store for them also, more than we may expect, to be revealed in due time. The *Jews* considered the *Gentiles* as dogs in comparison of themselves. And the brute creatures appear by the foregoing history of association to differ from us in degree, rather than in kind.

It may be objected here, that, if this opinion of the ultimate happiness of all mankind be true, it is not, however, proper to publish it. Men are very wicked, notwithstanding the fear of eternal punishment; and therefore will probably be more so, if that fear be removed, and a hope given to the most wicked of attaining everlasting happiness ultimately. I answer, First, That this opinion is already published so far, that very few irreligious persons can be supposed to believe the contrary much longer: or, if they do believe absolutely eternal punishment to be the doctrine of the scriptures, they will be much induced thereby to reject revealed religion itself. It seems therefore to be now a proper time to inquire candidly and impartially into the truth. The world abounds so much with writers, that the mere opinion of a single one cannot be supposed to have any great weight. The arguments produced will themselves be examined, and a person can now do little more than

than bring things to view for the judgment of others. The number of teachers in all arts and sciences is so great, that no one amongst them can or ought to have followers, unless as far as he follows truth.

But, Secondly, It does not seem, that even the motives of fear are lessened to considerate persons, by supposing the fire of hell to be only a purifying one. For it is clear from the scriptures, that the punishment will be very dreadful and durable. We can set no bounds either to the degree or duration of it. They are therefore practically infinite.

Thirdly, The motives of love are infinitely enhanced by supposing the ultimate unlimited happiness of all. This takes off the charge of enthusiasm from that noble expression of some mystical writers, in which they resign themselves entirely to God, both for time and eternity. This makes us embrace even the most wicked with the most cordial, tender, humble affection. We pity them at present, as *vessels of wrath*; yet live in certain hopes of rejoicing with them at last; labour to bring this to pass, and to hasten it; and consider, that every thing is good, and pure, and perfect, in the sight of God.



## CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now gone through with my observations on the frame, duty, and expectations of MAN, finishing them with the doctrine of ultimate, unlimited happiness to all. This doctrine, if it be true, ought at once to dispel all gloominess, anxiety, and sorrow, from our hearts; and raise them to the highest pitch of love, adoration, and gratitude towards God, our most bountiful creator, and merciful father, and the inexhaustible source of all happiness and perfection. Here self-interest, benevolence, and piety, all concur to move and exalt our affections. How happy in himself, how benevolent to others, and how thankful to God, ought that man to be, who believes both himself and others born to an infinite expectation! Since God has bid us rejoice, what can make us sorrowful? Since he has created us for happiness, what misery can we fear? If we be really intended for ultimate unlimited happiness, it is no matter to a truly resigned person, when, or where, or how. Nay, could any of us fully conceive, and be duly influenced by, this glorious expectation, this infinite balance in our favour, it would be sufficient to deprive all present evils of their sting and bitterness. It would be a sufficient answer to the *πρόθεν τὸ κακόν*, to all our difficulties and anxieties from the folly, vice, and misery, which we experience in ourselves, and see in others, to say, that they will all  
 end

end in unbounded knowledge, virtue, and happiness; and that the progress of every individual in his passage through an eternal life is from imperfect to perfect, particular to general, less to greater, finite to infinite, and from the creature to the Creator.

But, alas! this is chiefly speculation, and must be to the bulk of mankind. Whilst we continue entangled in the fetters of sin, we cannot enjoy the glorious liberty and privileges of the children of God. We cannot exalt ourselves to heaven, and make a right estimate of things, from the true point of view, till we get clear of the attraction, and magic influences of the earth. Whence it follows, that this doctrine, however great and glorious in itself, in the eye of a being sufficiently advanced in purity and comprehension, must be to us like the book given to St. *John*, *bitter in the belly*, though *sweet in the mouth*. The first general view cannot but charm us, however groveling and corrupt our minds may be. But when we begin to digest it, when, after mature deliberation, we come to see its several evidences, connections, and consequences, our self-interest, our benevolence, and our piety, in proportion to their strength and purity, will all rise up, and join their forces, and alarm us to the utmost extent of our faculties. When we consider the purity required of those, who are so happy as to escape the second death, and the purifying lake of fire, whose smoke ascendeth up for ever and ever, *i. e.* for ages of ages, we cannot but be in pain for ourselves, and work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. When we view the sin and wickedness, with which the world every where abounds, our hearts cannot but melt with compassion for others; for the tortures that are prepared for them, after the expiration of this life, in order to fit them for pure and spiritual happiness, to burn out the stains of sensuality and self-love, and exalt them to the unbounded

love of God, and his works. When we consider farther, that God has mercy on whom he will, and hardens whom he will, and that we, with all our pleasures and pains, are absolute nothings in comparison of him, we must, like St. *John* again, fall down at his feet dead with astonishment. And yet we need not fear; from the instant that we thus humble ourselves, he will lay his hand upon us, and exalt us; he has the keys of death and hell, in every possible sense of those words.

There is also another consideration, which, though of less moment than the foregoing, is yet abundantly sufficient to move the compassion of the good, and alarm the fears of the wicked; I mean the temporal evils and woes, which will probably fall upon the nominally christian states of these western parts, the christian *Babylon*, before the great revolution predicted in the scriptures, before the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. These evils will be brought upon us by our excess of wickedness, just as the deluge was upon the old world, and the destruction of *Sodom* upon its lewd inhabitants, through theirs; they may also be somewhat delayed, or alleviated, by reformations public or private, even partial and temporary ones. I will therefore make a few short remarks concerning such things, as seem more particularly to call for the attention of the present christian world; at least of those good *Philadelphians*, who are desirous to keep themselves and others from that hour of temptation, which is coming upon us all. My remarks must be supposed to relate chiefly to this kingdom; to be suggested by what occurs in it; and to be calculated, as far as my poor, but sincere and earnest endeavours can have any weight, to stem for a while that torrent of vice and impiety, which seem ready to swallow us up, and, if possible, to protract the life of the body politic. But I  
presume,

presume, that the resemblance between all the states of *christendom* is so great in all the points here considered, that the practical consequences are the same upon the whole.

There are six things, which seem more especially to threaten ruin and dissolution to the present states of *christendom*.

First, The great growth of atheism and infidelity, particularly amongst the governing part of these states.

Secondly, The open and abandoned lewdness, to which great numbers of both sexes, especially in the high ranks of life, have given themselves up.

Thirdly, The fordid and avowed self-interest, which is almost the sole motive of action in those who are concerned in the administration of public affairs.

Fourthly, The licentiousness and contempt of every kind of authority, divine and human, which is so notorious in inferiors of all ranks.

Fifthly, The great worldly-mindedness of the clergy, and their gross neglects in the discharge of their proper functions.

Sixthly, The carelessness and infatuation of parents and magistrates with respect to the education of youth, and the consequent early corruption of the rising generation.

All these things have evident mutual connections and influences; and, as they all seem likely to increase from time to time, so it can scarce be doubted by a considerate man, whether he be a religious one or no, but that they will, sooner or later, bring on a total dissolution of all the forms of government, that subsist at present in the christian countries of *Europe*. I will note down some of the principal facts of each kind, and shew their utter inconsistency with the



the welfare of a body politic, and their necessary tendency to anarchy and confusion.

I begin with the atheism and infidelity which prevail so much among the governing part of these western kingdoms. That infidelity prevails, especially in these kingdoms, will readily be acknowledged by all. But the same persons, who treat the christian religion, and its advocates, with so much scorn, will probably, some of them at least, profess a regard to natural religion; and it may seem hard to question their sincerity. However, as far as has occurred to my observation, these persons either deceive themselves, or attempt to deceive others, in this. There appears in them no love or fear of God, no confidence in him, no delight in meditating upon him, in praying to him, or praising him, no hope or joy in a future state. Their hearts and treasures are upon this earth, upon sensual pleasures, or vain amusements, perhaps of philosophy or philology, pursued to pass the time, upon honour or riches. And indeed there are the same objections, in general, to natural religion as to revealed, and no stronger evidences for it. On the contrary, the historical and moral evidences for the general truth of the scriptures, which these persons deny, are more convincing and satisfactory to philosophical as well as to vulgar capacities, than the arguments that are usually brought to prove the existence and attributes of God, his providence, or a future state: not but that these last are abundantly sufficient to satisfy an earnest and impartial inquirer.

If now there really be a God, who is our natural and moral governor, and who expects, that we should regard him as such, those magistrates who care not to have him in their thoughts, to suffer him to interfere in their scheme of government, who *say in their hearts, there is no God*, or wish it, or even bid open defiance to him (though I hope and believe this

this last is not often the case), cannot prosper; but must bring down vengeance upon themselves, and the wicked nations over whom they preside. In like manner, if God has sent his beloved son Jesus Christ to be an example to the world, to die for it, and to govern it, it cannot be an indifferent thing whether we attend to his call or no. The neglect of revealed religion, especially in persons of authority, is the same thing as declaring it to be false; for, if true, the neglect of it is, as one may say, high treason against the majesty of heaven. He that honours not the Son, cannot honour the Father, who hath sent him with sufficient credentials. And accordingly, if we consider the second psalm as a prophecy relating to Christ, which it certainly is, those kings and magistrates, who rise up against God and his Christ, intending to shake off the restraints of natural and revealed religion, must expect to be broken in pieces like a potter's vessel. Since they will not *kiss the Son*, and *rejoice before him with reverence*, they must expect, that he will *rule over them with a rod of iron*.

Nay, we may go farther, and affirm, that if there were no satisfactory evidence for natural or revealed religion, still it is the interest of princes and governors to improve that which there is to the best advantage. The happiness of their people, their own interest with them, their power, their safety, their all, depend upon it. Neither is this any intricate, far fetched, or doubtful position, but a truth which lies upon the surface of things, which is evident at first sight, and undeniable after the most thorough examination. So that for governors to render religion contemptible in the eyes of their subjects, by example or insinuation, and much more by directly ridiculing or vilifying it, is manifest infatuation; it is seeing without perceiving, and hearing without understanding, through the grossness and carnality

carnality of their hearts. And it may be part of the infatuation predicted to come upon the wicked in the latter ages of the world. For then the *wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand.*

Religion is often said by unbelievers, to have been the invention of wise law-givers, and artful politicians, in order to keep the vicious and head-strong multitude in awe. How little does the practice of the present times suit with this ! The administrators of public affairs in the present times are not even wise or artful enough to take advantage of a pure religion, handed down to them from their ancestors, and which they certainly did not invent ; but endeavour to explode it at the manifest hazard of all that is dear to them. For mankind can never be kept in subjection to government, but by the hopes and fears of another world ; nay, the express precepts, promises, and threatenings of the gospel are requisite for this purpose. The unwritten law of nature is too pliable, too subtle, and too feeble ; a dishonest heart can easily explain it, or its motives, away ; and violent passions will not suffer it to be heard ; whereas the precepts of revealed religion are absolute and express, and its motives alarming to the highest degree, where the scriptures are received and considered, in any measure, as they ought to be.

The *Greek* and *Roman* philosophy and morality was not indeed equal to ours ; but we may have a sufficient specimen from thence, how little very good doctrines, when taught without authority, are able to check the growing corruption of mankind. Had not christianity intervened at the declension of the *Roman* empire, and put a stop to the career of vice, the whole body politic of the civilized nations of that empire, must have been dissolved from the mere wickedness and corruption of its several parts. And much rather may the same come upon

upon us, if after such light and evidence we cast off the restraints and motives of revealed religion.

I would not be understood to speak here to those alone, who are legally the governors of the nations of *christendom*, *i. e.* who have a particular legislative or executive power vested in them by the constitutions or customs of their respective countries; but also to all such as by their eminence in any way, their learning, their titles, their riches, &c. draw the world after them. And it seems requisite to remind the two learned professions of law and physic, that though they are no ways qualified to judge of the evidence for religion, unless they have examined it carefully, *i. e.* with the same attention and impartiality, as they would do a matter of law or physic, where it is their interest to form a right judgment (in which case there seems to be no doubt but they will determine for it); yet the illiterate part of mankind will easily catch the infection from them on account of their general, confused reputation of being learned, and by means of the plausible ways of haranguing and descanting upon topics, to which they are formed by their educations and professions. And thus, whether they attend to it or no, they become the seducers of mankind, and rocks of offence to the weak and ignorant, and load themselves with the guilt of other men's sins. This caution is so much the more necessary, as it is common for young students in these professions to list themselves on the side of irreligion, and become nominal infidels of course, and from fashion, as it were; and without pretending, as indeed there could be no reasonable pretence, to have examined into the merits of the cause. Which blind and implicit faith in the blind, in one does not know what or whom, would be most unaccountable in those who profess infidelity, were it not, that this is in every other instance a contradiction to itself, and must be so, on  
account



account of the wilful infatuation from which it arises.

I will now shew briefly how the prevalence of infidelity increases, and is increased by, the other evils here mentioned. That it opens a door to lewdness, cannot be doubted by any one; and indeed the strictness and purity of the christian religion, in this respect, is probably the chief thing, which makes vicious men first fear and hate, and then vilify and oppose it. The unwritten law of nature cannot fix precise bounds to the commerce between the sexes. This is too wide a field, as I have observed above; and yet it highly approves of chastity in thought, word, and deed. If therefore men reject only revealed religion, great libertinism must ensue; but if they reject natural also, which is generally the case, we can expect nothing but the most abandoned dissoluteness.

As to self-interest, we may observe, that those who have no hopes in futurity, no piety towards God, and consequently no solid or extensive benevolence towards men, cannot but be engrossed by the most sordid and groveling kind, that which rests in present possessions and enjoyments. And, conversely, when such a self-interest has taken root, they must be averse to religion, because it opens distant and ungrateful views to them, and inculcates the pure and disinterested love of God, and their neighbour; to them an enthusiastic and impossible project.

In like manner infidelity must dispose men to shake off the yoke of authority, to unbounded licentiousness; and reciprocally is itself the natural consequence of every degree of licentiousness. Those who do not regard the supreme authority, can be little expected to regard any of his vicegerents; those who do not fear God, will not honour the king. If the infatuation of princes was not of the deepest kind, they

they could not but see, that they hold their dominions entirely by the real christianity that is left amongst, us; and that, if they do succeed in taking away this foundation, or weakening it much farther, their governments must fall, like houses built upon sand. Besides the great influence which christianity has to make men humble and obedient, it is to be considered, that our ancestors have so interwoven it with the constitutions of the kingdoms of *Europe*, that they must stand or fall together. Christianity is the cement of the buildings.

It is also evident, that the infidelity of the laity must have an ill effect in respect of the clergy. Many of these must be the sons of infidels, thrust into the church by their parents for subsistence, or with a view to great honours and profits; and must carry with them a deep tincture of the corruption and infidelity, which they imbibed in their infancy and youth. And it is not less evident, that the worldly-mindedness and neglect of duty in the clergy is a great scandal to religion, and cause of infidelity; the chief probably after the impatience of restraint in respect of chastity in the laity. It is also to be considered, that unbelieving magistrates will have little regard to the piety of the persons, whom they promote to the highest stations of the church, but rather to their flattery, subserviency, and apparent political usefulness.

Lastly, As to the perverted education of youth, atheism and infidelity are both the cause and effect of this in so obvious a manner, that it seems superfluous to enlarge upon it.

The lewdness which I have mentioned above, as a second cause of the future dissolution of these western kingdoms, is now risen to such a height, as almost to threaten utter confusion. Men glory in their shame, and publicly avow what in former ages was industriously concealed. Princes are justly charge-  
able

able with a great part of this public guilt. Their courts will imitate them, in what is bad at least; and be led on thereby from one degree of shamelessness to another. The evil increases gradually; for neither courts, nor private persons, become quite profligate at once; and this may make some almost persuade themselves, that the present times are not worse than the preceding. The sins of this kind are, for the most part, joined with idolatry in the prophetic writings, and made the types thereof. So that the open and avowed practice of them is an open renunciation of our allegiance to God and Christ; and, agreeably to this, is, as has been observed above, the principal cause why so many persons reject revealed religion. But if we renounce our allegiance and covenant, we can be no longer under the protection of God.

The gross self-interest, which is now the principal motive in most marriages in high life, is both a cause and consequence of this libertinism. The same may be observed of the great contempt, in which marriage is held, and which almost threatens promiscuous concubinage among the higher ranks, and the professed unbelievers.

As to the clergy, if they neglect to admonish princes and great men through fear, and servile interest, a great part of the national guilt will lie at their doors; and, if they become, in general, infected with this vice (which indeed is not the case now; but may perhaps hereafter, as all things grow worse), it will soon be the entire subversion of the external form of church government; however certain it be, that the church of those, who *worship God in spirit, and in truth*, will prevail against the gates of hell.

The third great evil likely to hasten our ruin is the self-interest, which prevails so much amongst those, to whom the administration of public affairs is

is committed. It seems that bodies politic are in this particular, as in many others, analogous to individuals, that they grow more selfish, as they decline.

As things now are, one can scarce expect, that, in any impending danger, those who have it in their power to save a falling state, will attempt it, unless there be some prospect of gain to themselves. And, while they barter and cast about for the greatest advantages to themselves, the evil will become past remedy. Whether or no it be possible to administer public affairs upon upright and generous principles, after so much corruption has already taken place, may perhaps be justly questioned. However, if it cannot be now, much less can it be hereafter; and if this evil increases much more in this country, there is reason to fear, that an independent populace may get the upper hand, and overset the state. The wheels of government are already clogged so much, that it is difficult to transact the common necessary affairs, and almost impossible to make a good law.

The licentiousness of inferiors of all ranks, which is the fourth great evil, runs higher in this country perhaps, than in any other. However, the infection will probably spread. The inferiors in other countries cannot but envy and imitate those in this; and that more and more every day, as all mutual intercourses are enlarged. The self-interest just spoken of contributes greatly to this evil, the insolence of the populace against one party of their superiors being supported, and even encouraged, by the other, from interested views of displacing their opposites. Let it be observed also, that the laity of high rank, by ridiculing and insulting their superiors in the church, have had a great share in introducing the spirit of universal disobedience, and contempt of authority, amongst the inferior orders, in this nation.



The wicked and notoriously false calumnies, which are spread about concerning the royal family by the disaffected party in this country, may be ranked under this evil. Those who scruple to take the oaths required by the present government, ought at least to seek the peace of the country, where they live in peace, and the quiet enjoyment of their possessions. However, the crime of such as take the oaths, and still vilify, is much greater, and one of the highest offences that can be offered to the divine Majesty.

That worldly-mindedness, and neglect of duty, in the clergy, must hasten our ruin, cannot be doubted. These are *the salt of the earth*, and *the light of the world*. If they lose their savour, the whole nation, where this happens, will be converted into one putrid mass; if their light become darkness, the whole body politic must be dark also. The degeneracy of the court of *Rome*, and secular bishops abroad, are too notorious to be mentioned. They almost cease to give offence, as they scarce pretend to any function or authority, besides what is temporal. Yet still there is great mockery of God in their external pomp, and profanation of sacred titles; which, sooner or later, will bring down vengeance upon them. And as the court of *Rome* has been at the head of the great apostasy and corruption of the christian church, and seems evidently marked out in various places of the scriptures, the severest judgments are probably reserved for her.

But I rather choose to speak to what falls under the observation of all serious, attentive persons in this kingdom. The superior clergy are, in general, ambitious, and eager in the pursuit of riches; flatterers of the great, and subservient to party interest; negligent of their own immediate charges, and also of the inferior clergy, and their immediate charges. The inferior clergy imitate their superiors, and, in general,

general, take little more care of their parishes, than barely what is necessary to avoid the censure of the law. And the clergy of all ranks are, in general, either ignorant; or, if they do apply, it is rather to profane learning, to philosophical or political matters, than to the study of the scriptures, of the oriental languages, of the fathers, and ecclesiastical authors, and of the writings of devout men in different ages of the church. I say this is, in general, the case, *i. e.* far the greater part of the clergy of all ranks in this kingdom are of this kind. But there are some of a quite different character, men eminent for piety, sacred learning, and the faithful discharge of their duty, and who, it is not to be doubted, mourn in secret for the crying sins of this and other nations. The clergy, in general, are also far more free from open and gross vices, than any other denomination of men amongst us, physicians, lawyers, merchants, soldiers, &c. However, this may be otherwise hereafter. For it is said, that in some foreign countries the superior clergy, in others the inferior, are as corrupt and abandoned, or more so, than any other order of men. The clergy in this kingdom seem to be what one might expect from the mixture of good and bad influences that affect them. But then, if we make this candid allowance for them, we must also make it for persons in the high ranks of life, for their infidelity, lewdness, and fordid self-interest. And though it becomes an humble, charitable, and impartial man, to make all these allowances; yet he cannot but see, that the judgments of God are ready to fall upon us all for these things; and that they may fall first, and with the greatest weight, upon those, who, having the highest office committed to them in the spiritual kingdom of Christ, neglect it, and are become mere *merchants of the earth, and shepherds, that feed themselves, and not their flocks.*

How greatly might the face of things be changed in this kingdom, were any number of the superior, or even of the inferior clergy, to begin to discharge their respective functions with true christian zeal, courage, and fidelity ! The earnestness of some might awaken and excite others, and the whole lump be leavened. At least, we might hope to delay or alleviate the miseries, that threaten us. Why are not all the poor taught to read the Bible, all instructed in the church catechism, so as to have such principles of religion early instilled into them, as would enable them to take delight in, and to profit by, the Bible, and practical books of religion ? Why are not all the sick visited, the feeble-minded comforted, the unruly warned ? And why do not ministers go about, thus doing good, and seeking out those who want their assistance ? Why do not the superior clergy inquire into these things, punish and discourage all negligent parish ministers, reward and promote those that are pious and diligent ? Let those worthy clergymen, who lament the degeneracy of their own order, inform the public what is practicable and fitting to be done in these things. I can only deliver general remarks, such as occur to a by-stander.

There are great complaints made of the irregularities of the methodists, and, I believe, not without reason. The surest means to check these irregularities is, for the clergy to learn from the methodists what is good in them, to adopt their zeal, and concern for lost souls : this would soon unite all that are truly good amongst the methodists to the clergy, and disarm such as are otherwise. And if the methodists will hearken to one, who means sincerely well to all parties, let me entreat them to reverence their superiors, to avoid spiritual selfishness, and zeal for particular phrases and tenets, and not to sow divisions in parishes and families, but to be  
peace-

peace-makers, as they hope to be called the children of God. The whole world will never be converted, but by those who are of a truly catholic spirit. Let me entreat all parties as a sincere friend and lover of all, not to be offended with the great, perhaps unjustifiable freedom, which I have used, but to lay to heart the charges here brought, to examine how far they are true, and reform wherever they are found to be so.

If the state of things in this and other nations be, in any measure, what I have above described, it is no wonder, that the education of youth should be grossly perverted and corrupted, so that one may justly fear, that every subsequent generation will exceed that which went before it in degeneracy and wickedness, till such time as the great tribulation come. Vicious parents cannot be sensible of the importance and necessity of a good and religious education, in order to make their children happy. They must corrupt them not only by their examples, but by many other ways, direct as well as indirect. As infidelity now spreads amongst the female sex, who have the care of both sexes during their infancy, it is to be feared, that many children will want the very elements of religion; be quite strangers to the scriptures, except as they sometimes hear them ridiculed; and be savages as to the internal man, as to their moral and religious knowledge and behaviour; and be distinguished from them chiefly by the feeble restraints of external politeness and decorum. It is evident from common observation, and more so from the foregoing theory, that children may be formed and moulded as we please. When therefore they prove vicious and miserable, the guilt lies at our doors, as well as theirs; and, on the contrary, he who educates a son, or a daughter, in the ways of piety and virtue, confers the highest obligation both upon his child, and upon the rising generation;  
and



and may be the instrument of salvation, temporal and eternal, to multitudes.

There are two things here, which deserve more particular attention, viz. the education of the clergy, and that of princes.

As to the first, one cannot but wonder, how it is possible for the many serious and judicious clergymen, who have the care of youth in public schools and universities, to be so negligent of the principal point, their moral and religious behaviour; and that especially as the regulation of this would make all other parts of education go on with so much more ease and success: how school-masters can still persist in teaching lewd poets after the remonstrances of pious men against this practice, and the evident ill consequences: how the tutors in the universities can permit such open debauchery, as is often practised there: and how sacred learning, which surely is the chief thing for scholars intended for the christian ministry, can be allowed so small a share of time and pains, both in schools, and in the universities. But, as I said before of the clergy in general, let those school-masters and tutors, who have religion at heart, speak fully to this point. I shall submit my own judgment in both cases, entirely to the better judgment of pious men, that are conversant in these things.

As to the education of princes, the case is every thing but desperate; so that one could scarce think of mentioning it, were it not for the great change in the face of things, which would immediately ensue, if but so much as one sovereign prince would set aside all self-regards, and devote himself entirely to the promotion of religion, and the service of mankind. I do not at all mean to intimate, that princes are worse than other men, proper allowances being made. On the contrary, I suppose they are just the same. And they have an undoubted right to

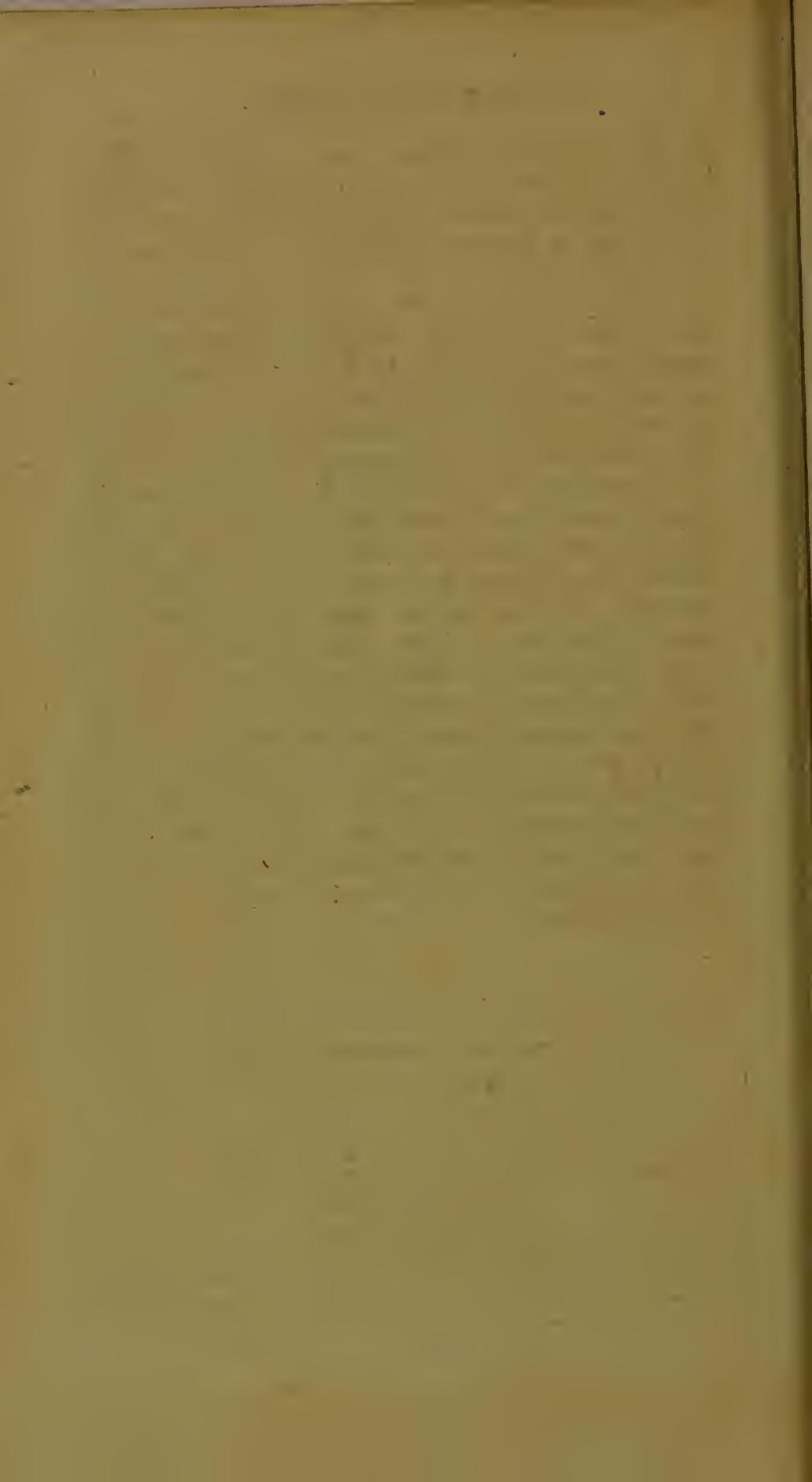
to the greatest candour, and compassion from their subjects, on account of the extraordinary difficulties and temptations, with which they are beset, as well as to the most profound reverence, and entire obedience.

These are my real and earnest sentiments upon these points. It would be great rashness to fix a time for the breaking of the storm that hangs over our heads, as it is blindness and infatuation not to see it; not to be aware, that it may break. And yet this infatuation has always attended all falling states. The kingdoms of *Judah* and *Israel*, which are the types of all the rest, were thus infatuated. It may be, that the prophecies concerning *Edom*, *Moab*, *Ammon*, *Tyre*, *Egypt*, &c. will become applicable to particular kingdoms before their fall, and warn the good to flee out of them. And *christendom*, in general, seems ready to assume to itself the place and lot of the *Jews*, after they had rejected their Messiah the saviour of the world. Let no one deceive himself or others. The present circumstances of the world are extraordinary and critical, beyond what has ever yet happened. If we refuse to let Christ reign over us, as our redeemer and saviour, we must be slain before his face, as enemies, at his second coming.

END OF DR. HARTLEY'S WORK.

---

WARRINGTON,  
W. Eyres, Printer, Horse-Market.

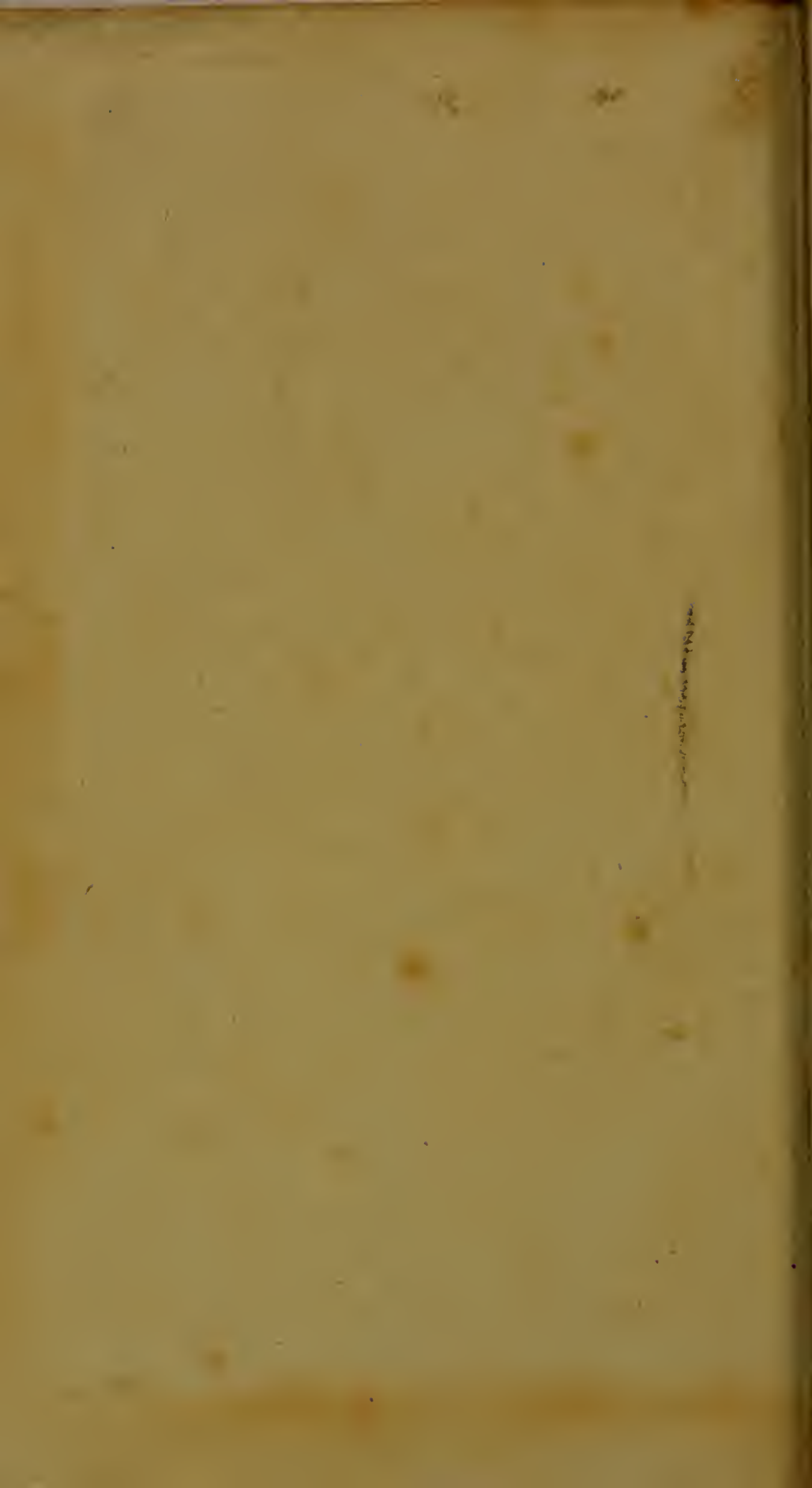












3 2. 1994





